



**Aurora Public Library Board**  
**MEETING**  
**Wednesday, September 16, 2020**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
Via video conference

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## **AGENDA**

1. Adoption of Agenda
2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
3. Minutes of:
  - .1 June 17, 2020 Meeting *(enclosure)*
4. Reports
  - .1 Second Quarter Operations Report SR2020.18 *(enclosure)*
  - .2 Second Quarter Use Indicators Report SR2020.19 *(enclosure)*
  - .3 Financial Statement for period ending June 30, 2020 SR2020.20 *(enclosure)*
  - .4 2021 Aurora Public Library Board Meeting Schedule SR2020.21 *(enclosure)*
5. Items for Consideration
  - .1 Library Operating Hours Report SR2020.22 *(enclosure)*
  - .2 2019 Annual Report SR2020.23 *(enclosure)*
6. Library CEO Updates
  - .1 CEO Updates *(verbal report)*
7. General Business Information/Questions
  - .1 APL Updates *(enclosure)*
8. Member Announcements
9. Date of Next Meeting: **Wednesday, October 21, 2020**
10. Adjournment

**\*\* Please advise Maida Rae of regrets for attendance, by noon on September 16<sup>th</sup> by emailing [mrae@aurorapl.ca](mailto:mrae@aurorapl.ca).**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89459771463?pwd=VkE1L2VYaWs5OThMNmY5SEY4U1h1Zz09>

Meeting ID: 894 5977 1463

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## **Aurora Public Library Board**

### **MINUTES of MEETING**

**Wednesday, June 17, 2020**

The Aurora Public Library Board held its regular meeting on Wednesday, June 17, 2020 via video conference call.

Present: John Clement, Tom Connor (Chair), Councillor Sandra Humfries, Councillor Harold Kim, Adam Mobbs (Vice Chair), Marie Rankel, Ken Turriff

Chief Executive Officer: Bruce Gorman

Staff: Mario Baleno (Acting) Manager, IT; Reccia Mandelcorn, Manager, Community Collaboration; Jodi Marr, Manager, Customer Opportunity; Ashley Nunn-Smith, Manager, Content, Access & Innovation; Maida Rae, HR Coordinator/EA (recorder), Julie Rocca, Business Manager

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The Chair called the meeting to order at 07:02 p.m.

#### **1. Adoption of the Agenda**

MOTION: **20.06.49**

Moved by: M. Rankel

Seconded by: J. Clement

CARRIED

**THAT** the Agenda be approved

#### **2. Disclosure of Interest**

#### **3. Presentation**

- .1 Andrea Nauss, CPA, CA, Manager BDO Canada, LLP  
Re: 2019 Audited Financial Statements and SR2020.15

Tom Connor welcomed Andrea Nauss of BDO Canada and asked her to present the 2019 Audited Financial Statements.

MOTION: **20.06.50**

Moved by: A. Mobbs

Seconded by: Councillor S. Humfries

CARRIED

**THAT** the Audited Financial Statements as of December 31, 2019 be approved

Completing a remote audit was challenging, and A. Nauss expressed thanks to APL

Business Manager J. Rocca for her assistance and cooperation during this new process. In light of the COVID-19 closure, the auditor recommended utilization of electronic records going forward.

*Councillor H. Kim joined the meeting at 7:11 p.m.*

**4. Approval of Minutes:**

.1 Regular meeting of May 20, 2020

MOTION: **20.06.51**

Moved by: Councillor H. Kim

Seconded by: J. Clement

CARRIED

**THAT** the Minutes of the May 20, 2020 meeting be approved

**5. Correspondence**

Copies of correspondence were circulated for information.

.1 Susan Mullin, CFRE, President and CEO  
Southlake Foundation  
Re: Thank you for 3-D printed ear savers

May 18, 2020

MOTION: **20.06.52**

Moved by: K. Turriff

Seconded by: Councillor S. Humfries

CARRIED

**THAT** the correspondence be received as information

**6. Items for Consideration**

.1 ***Internet Access Service Policy Report SR2020.16***

A staff report was issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **20.06.53**

Moved by: K. Turriff

Seconded by: J. Clement

CARRIED

**THAT** the revised Internet Access Service Policy dated June 17, 2020 be approved

This updated policy focuses on expanded wireless service while maintaining corporate network security, with updates to language and terminology.

.2 ***Fine Free Report SR2020.17***

A staff report was issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **20.06.54**

Moved by: A. Mobbs

Seconded by: K. Turriff

CARRIED

**THAT** Aurora Public Library waive fines for the remainder of 2020



Waiving fines for the remainder of the year will not impact service, and will help community members experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19.

Councillor H. Kim noted that this was in keeping with Town direction to their staff to wean off penalty revenue as part of budget revenue.

B. Gorman added that there are discussions throughout the library community to eliminate fines and penalties completely. A communications strategy will be developed to communicate APL's decision to temporarily waive fines to the community, clarifying that overdue fines will be waived, but individuals would still be responsible for lost and damaged items.

## **7. Library CEO Updates**

### **.1 *CEO Updates***

A verbal report was provided at the meeting.

MOTION: **20.06.55**  
Moved by: M. Rankel  
Seconded: K. Turriff  
CARRIED

**THAT** the Library CEO Updates verbal report be received as information

B. Gorman updated the Board on the Library's Employee Assistance Plan (EAP), available to all staff starting in July. Previously, only full-time staff were eligible for the Library's EAP.

B. Gorman is a member of the Cultural Roundtable Group, where Aurora cultural partners meet virtually to discuss issues, concerns, stories. Minister Christine Elliott was a special guest at a recent meeting.

B. Gorman and M. Rankel attended the SOLS Board Trustee online session.

The decision to place staff on Declared Emergency Leave (DEL) was difficult, but the responsible option available in uncertain times. Staff that remained on salary were tasked with exploring virtual programming options and maintaining key operations. The online environment created by APL staff is second to none in the province, offering engaging and unique programming, stories, trivia etc. There has been a positive response from the community.

The success of the 2019 Summer Reading Club (SRC) will carry forward virtually this year with the assistance of Beanstack, a tool geared to facilitating online engagement. Virtual SRC programs will roll out for children, teens and adults. There will also be curbside pick-up for activities/take and make projects that include instructions from staff.

APL's curbside pick-up service was up and running quickly, and the model chosen is customer focused and contactless. With the introduction of this service, we have called back the majority of our employees, with some staff focused on curbside pick up and others on our virtual offerings.

A staff Reopening Team has been established to ensure that when permitted, we are

prepared to safely open Library doors to the public. The management group is highly dedicated, and we are supporting staff with regular communications and providing accommodations when needed for childcare etc.

There are meetings scheduled with CUPE to continue bargaining for the Pages/Temporary Workers unit.

Special congratulations to Tom Connor, Aurora's Citizen of the Year. After decades served helping the Library, Tom understands how libraries help communities and we are fortunate to have him as our Chair, and the Town of Aurora is fortunate to have him as a community member.

## **8. General Business Information/Questions**

### **.1 *Town of Aurora General Committee Report CMS20-012 Library Square – Governance Review***

A Town of Aurora staff report was issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **20.06.56**

Moved by: M. Rankel

Seconded by: A. Mobbs

CARRIED

**THAT** the Library Square – Governance Review Report be received as information

This report was approved by Council last night.

### **.2 *APL Updates***

Articles and photographs were issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **20.06.57**

Moved by: K. Turriff

Seconded by: A. Mobbs

CARRIED

**THAT** the APL Updates be received as information

Newspaper articles and media coverage from mid-May to early June were provided that highlight APL's programs and services.

## **9. Member Announcements**

J. Marr informed the Board that there will be a virtual coding camp for 10 weeks this summer and encouraged participation in Summer Reading Club.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

**11. Adjournment**

MOTION: **20.06.58**

Moved by: A. Mobbs

Seconded by: J. Clement

CARRIED

**THAT** the meeting be adjourned  
at 8:20 p.m.

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T. Connor  
Chair

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B. Gorman  
Chief Executive Officer

DRAFT



## **Aurora Public Library Board**

### **REPORT SR2020.18**

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**SUBJECT:** ***SECOND QUARTER OPERATIONS REPORT***

**FROM:** Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

**DATE:** September 16, 2020

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the *Second Quarter Operations Report to June 30, 2020* be approved.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In 2019, the quarterly Operations Report was revised to align with the strategic goals and objectives identified by the Library's management team. These annual goals and objectives reflect the Library's Strategic Plan 2017-2021 "Place of Possibilities".

The Library's management team have identified goals relating to the Strategic Plan for 2020. As a result of the government mandated closure of public libraries due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the annual Goals and Objectives have been reviewed and revised by the Library's management team where necessary to reflect the changes in the Library's operations. The management team have provided updates on the established timelines and targets in the attached spreadsheet, *Aurora Public Library 2020 Strategic Plan Goals*.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

***Aurora Public Library 2020 Strategic Plan Goals***

***Assisted by: Executive Leadership Team  
Maida Rae, Human Resources Coordinator/EA***

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*Bruce Gorman  
Chief Executive Officer*

| 2020 GOALS   | ACTION       | RESPONSIBLE | STATUS %        | START    | END  | SUCCESS MEASURE   | NOTES | ACHIEVED |
|--|--------------|-------------|-----------------|----------|--|---|-------|----------|
| Strategic Direction<br>Build Community   |              |             |                 |          |  |   |       |          |
| Seek community board position  | Bruce        | 75%         | February        | August   | Attain a board position at Southlake Regional Health Centre  | Have contacted Southlake Regional Health Centre<br><br>Spoke with Tracey Austin at Southlake and send documents for consideration<br><br>Waiting for decision   |       |          |
| Explore shared opportunities with York Region libraries                                  | Bruce/Ashley |             | April           | TBD      | Cost savings, improved efficiency, and enhanced service<br><br>Reciprocal customer satisfaction (survey)             | BARA (Borrow Anywhere Return Anywhere) N6+1 and S3<br><br>Champion streamlined courier and inter-library services among York Region libraries to provide improved service to residents<br><br>Begin discussions with N6 libraries at April meeting<br><br>Physical circulation on hold / risk of increased community spread of COVID 19             |       |          |
| Present economic impact of Aurora Public Library on the Town                             | Bruce/ Julie | 75%         | June            | December | Showcase financial value to community  | Implement value calculator and undertake economic impact study  |       |          |
| Advocate for library and community interests throughout library square project lifecycle | Bruce        | 25%         | December (2019) | December | Best of class service<br><br>Access to new programming spaces<br><br>New green space<br><br>Enhanced user experience | Ensure library voice is an important part of the discussion<br><br>Assist with development and implementation of governance model and operational best practices. CEO a member of the governance team.<br><br>Showcased images of Library Square in Library<br><br>Delegated to Council<br><br>Tender awarded. Construction kickoff meeting Sept 22 |       |          |

| 2020 GOALS  | ACTION | RESPONSIBLE | STATUS % | START    | END       | SUCCESS MEASURE   | NOTES   | ACHIEVED   |
|---|--------|-------------|----------|----------|-----------|---|---|--|
| Increase newcomer/multicultural involvement with APL                                      |        | Reccia      | 90%      | February | September | 50 targeted newcomer responses<br><br>Create programs to mark Black History Month | Rita Cox Live!<br><br>Culinary Traveller (Barbados with Chef Maxine)<br><br>Being Black in Canada<br><br>Newcomer Nature Tour   | Feb 1 2020<br><br>Feb 6 2020<br><br>Feb 20 2020<br><br>Feb 22 2020 |
| Develop new initiatives that extend our reach to pre-birth and end-life audiences.        |        | Reccia      | 100%     | January  | September | Creation of new initiatives such as the Baby Café, Death Café                     | Possible partners include Hospices, Southlake Regional Health Centre<br><br>Death Café<br><br>Books for Babies (partnership with Southlake, NPL & EG)<br>Books & postcard delivered<br>First recipient Feb. 2020<br>Books distributed in discharge packages (June onward)<br><br>Baby Café<br>Pilot; monthly meetings | Jan 30 2020<br><br><br><br>Feb 2020<br><br><br>Jan – March 2020    |
| Develop in-library Community collaboration programs & events to a virtual environment     |        | Reccia      | 100%     | March    | December  | Adapted/ new programs   | Including: Managing Finances During COVID-19; Out of the Ashes (podcast); Poetry & Writing contests (adapted); APL Writers Group on Zoom; Friday afternoon weekend writing challenges (FB) All fall events were rescheduled to virtual platform; NFB doc streaming; What's for Dinner?; Scholars Hub @ Home           | COVID Pivot  |
| Develop a programming plan that communicates dates, delivery model and required resources |        | Jodi        | 20%      | January  | November  | Improved customer experience through survey results and operational efficiency    | Developed a template for Borealis submissions<br>Surveyed Parasite audience for other film suggestions<br>Storytime evaluation by manager (on hold while storytime is virtual only.) Developing online surveys for our virtual programming to be rolled out in the Fall.  |  |

| 2020 GOALS  | ACTION | RESPONSIBLE | STATUS % | START   | END       | SUCCESS MEASURE  | NOTES   | ACHIEVED |
|---|--------|-------------|----------|---------|-----------|--|---|----------|
| Increase culturally diverse programming   |        | Jodi        | 10%      | January | December  | Deliver four new programs highlighting culturally diverse celebrations   | Two French programs were planned for the Spring but were cancelled due to our COVID-19 closure.   |          |
| <b>Strategic Direction</b><br><b>Place of Possibilities</b>   |        |             |          |         |           |  |   |          |
| Develop capital plan based on outcomes of Growth Accommodation Study                                      |        | Bruce       | 75%      | June    | September | Predictable and informed forecast<br>Defined timelines   | Architectural renderings to be presented to the Board in October for consideration  |          |
| Explore hosting after hours events  |        | Bruce       |          | October | December  | Additional venue for unique events and gatherings. New revenue source  | Add to the existing event inventory in Aurora, complement to Library Square   |          |
| Explore sustainability options  |        | Bruce       |          | August  | December  | Reduce footprint and emissions<br><br>Leader in green initiatives<br><br>Impact of heat island effect<br><br>Align with Growth Accommodation | Sustainability, green design and reducing our carbon footprint should be built into growth accommodation project.<br>From installation of a garden and green space to exploring sustainable site development techniques, to water efficiency, to energy efficiency, to responsible material selection, to indoor environmental quality innovation, to design elements that will reduce our operational environmental impact and support the social and cultural needs of our community. |          |
| Develop and implement a local content strategy, involving community partners, digitization, and promotion |        | Ashley      | 10%      | May     | October   | 10% increase in local content circulation  | Research into best practices and community partners has continued remotely<br><br>Digitization and other work on the cataloguing & processing of physical items has been deferred   |          |

| 2020 GOALS   | ACTION | RESPONSIBLE | STATUS % | START    | END      | SUCCESS MEASURE  | NOTES  | ACHIEVED      |
|--|--------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|--|--|---------------|
| Investigate circulating non-traditional collections  |        | Ashley      | 20%      | January  | TBD      | 5% increase in loans   | Backpacks ready to be processed, then circulated<br><br>Physical circulation on hold / risk of increased community spread of COVID 19  |               |
| With physical circulation on hold, efforts and funds diverted to increasing access to digital collection |        | Ashley      | 80%      | March    | December | 15% increase in digital use  | Collection spending is based on evidence of demand. As soon as the library closure was announced, increased digital access, monitored daily, as it is our only collection accessible during the pandemic.<br><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collection Development team focusing selection on digital</li> <li>- Increasing licenses and limits where demand is high</li> <li>- Signed up for multiple trials and free offers by vendors</li> <li>- Promoting through redesigned Digital Shelf page</li> <li>- Producing how-to video tutorials for customers</li> <li>- Since closure, over <b>900 temporary digital cards</b> issued</li> <li>- Began <b>Virtual Account Renewal</b> appointments for existing cardholders on <b>June 10</b> using Zoom, Facetime and Skype. Staff take between 8 and 16 appointments a day to renew cardholders for full 2 year borrowing.</li> </ul> | COVID Refocus |
| Improve public computing experience with upgrade PC's to Windows 10                                      |        | Mario       | 20%      | February | November | Improved customer experience<br><br>Improved security                  | 26 new public PCs<br>Solid State<br>Received quotes from Lenovo, Dell, HP<br><br>Waiting for the Town to add us to their procurement vendor list to ensure best pricing for volume buying  |               |
| New computing experience   |        | Mario       |          | June     | November | Safe technology experience in library<br><br>Responding to new reality | We will rethink our approach to public computing.<br><br>Options could include using mobile devices such as laptops or Chromebooks to allow customers physical distance from each other.   | COVID Pivot   |



| 2020 GOALS  | ACTION     | RESPONSIBLE | STATUS % | START     | END   | SUCCESS MEASURE  | NOTES  | ACHIEVED |
|---|------------|-------------|----------|-----------|---|--|--|----------|
|   |            |             |          |           |   |  | Additional spacing of public computers on desks<br><br>Computer sanitizer acquired   |          |
| Explore deploying new children’s technologies   | Mario/Jodi |             |          | July      | November  | Enhance children’s learning experience by engaging with new technology. Alignment with STEAM.  | Tethered iPads to replace AWE stations Osmos<br><br>This will be put on hold as we want to temporarily limit touching of surfaces as much as possible. |          |
| Explore and implement an online engagement option for Summer Reading Club   | Jodi/Mario | 100%        | April    | July      | Launch an online SRC platform for APL customers.  | Purchased Beanstack as our online summer reading challenge option. Set-up 3 online challenges (TD SRC for children, Teen Reading Challenge and the APL Adult Reading Challenge). Challenges end on September 15/20 but we have had a combined total of 299 participants, with 2,326 badges earned, 234 books read and 107,194 minutes of reading (Sept 9, 2020)<br><br>Planning additional reading challenges for Fall 2020, Winter and Spring 2021. | COVID Pivot<br><br>Completed June 2020   |          |
| Enhance the staff and public network <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increase network capacity</li><li>Improve network security</li></ul> | Mario      | 20%         | January  | October   | Improve customer and staff experience<br><br>Create a more secure network environment for staff and customers | Review network topology, design, reduce latency, increase bandwidth<br><br>Windows 10 for staff computers (security upgrade)<br>All staff computers have been updated to Windows 10  |  |          |
| Enhance programming plan for Creative Studio  | Jodi       | 20%         | March    | September | Outline programming, use of space, pricing and training   | Planning is on hold as staff are unavailable to consult. Changes in approach to hands on programming may be considered upon re-open.<br><br>Re-imagined the use of this space and created ‘Take and Make Kits’ to meet our customer’s hands on programming needs. Program has been extremely successful and we have been able to use the tools in the  |  |          |

| 2020 GOALS  | ACTION      | RESPONSIBLE | STATUS % | START    | END  | SUCCESS MEASURE   | NOTES  | ACHIEVED |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|--|---|--|----------|
|   |             |             |          |          |  |   | Creative Studio to keep the cost of these kits down and demonstrate how you can use the resources. |          |
| Align programming with collections                  | Jodi        | 50%         | April    | December | Develop and deliver three new programs that highlight digital content and specific resources in the collection | Library staff are creating Readers Advisory social media posts highlighting available resources via our online eBook vendors. Staff have created videos to highlight helpful resources that focus on community needs (French and Spanish language resources)<br>Staff are developing an online Readers’ Advisory Service form as well as supplementary programming to highlight specific genres.  |  |          |
| Develop and deliver virtual programming             | Jodi/Reccia | 50%         | April    | December | Continue to offer virtual options of successful programs after the library reopens                             | Launch virtual programming and evaluate the engagement to determine whether it should be continued after we reopen.<br>Survey Monkey developed (run mid-Sept.)<br>Statistics from virtual programming continue to remain strong (April – May) more facilitators have come on board to deliver their programs virtually as the pandemic continues. Developing program specific feedback forms to gather more information from our customers. | COVID Pivot  |          |
| Improve web and mobile experience for our customers | Mario       | 20%         | April    | November | Drive more traffic to a better designed, responsive and more user friendly website                             | Bibliocommons a possible option<br>The Digital Shelf page has been redesigned to allow customers to easily navigate our digital resources.  |  |          |
| Strategic Direction<br>Organizational Capacity      |             |             |          |          |  |   |  |          |
| Reimagine staff workspace                           | Bruce       | 40%         | May      | November | Efficient work environment and workspaces  | Support for additional staff<br>Improved workflow/functionality.<br><br>Growth accommodation study presents relocation of staff workspace allowing for notable operational efficiency gains.  |  |          |

| 2020 GOALS   | ACTION | RESPONSIBLE | STATUS % | START     | END      | SUCCESS MEASURE  | NOTES  | ACHIEVED |
|--|--------|-------------|----------|-----------|----------|--|--|----------|
| Roll out new organizational structure  |        | Bruce       | 40%      | January   | TBD      | Efficient and effective service delivery and operations<br><br>Improved KPI's                                | Alignment of resources and strategic plan.<br>1.5 IPS positions added, new Team Lead added.<br><br>Related first quarter KPI's are significantly higher in spite of being closed 20% of the quarter<br><br>Did not fill additional CCLI position<br><br>Consider impact of COVID-19  |          |
| Maintain Library operations during Library Square construction                             |        | Bruce       | 20%      | September | December | Ensure customer experience<br><br>Mitigate day to day concerns<br><br>Collaborate with Town                  | Parking, access, receiving, programming, food service, maintenance, COVID implications<br><br>Oversee Library bridge interests<br><br>Lead library corridor and meeting room development<br><br>HVAC replacement<br><br>Partnership with Town<br><br>Construction kickoff meeting September 22<br><br>Maintain existing services (curbside pickup) |          |
| Develop a marketing plan that communicates delivery model, required resources and schedule |        | Reccia/Jodi | 90%      | June      | December | Effective and timely program and event marketing and promotion.<br><br>Increase program and event attendance | Marketing Plan (draft) to CEO & Jodi (Sept/8)  |          |
| Explore new program registration software  |        | Jodi/Mario  | 20%      | March     | November | Replace Eventbrite with program registration system that better meets our needs                              | Bibliocommons a possible option  |          |

| 2020 GOALS   | ACTION | RESPONSIBLE       | STATUS % | START     | END      | SUCCESS MEASURE  | NOTES  | ACHIEVED |
|--|--------|-------------------|----------|-----------|----------|--|--|----------|
| Provide training to community collaboration staff to better deliver in-community programming   |        | Jodi/Reccia       |          | September | December | Completion of online staff training modules created by Manager, CO as applicable to CC Staff |  |          |
| Enhance staff collaboration, efficiency and mobility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move to a cloud based collaboration software</li> <li>Investigate providing laptops and mobile devices to senior staff where appropriate</li> </ul> |        | Mario             | 10%      | June      | November | Efficient collaboration<br><br>Improved staff response time                                  | Although already planned for, the pandemic has shown that laptops and VPN access are necessary for senior staff.<br><br>We are currently equipped to allow VPN access, purchasing and configuring laptops are the next step. |          |
| Investigate, if appropriate to implement a staff intranet  |        | Mario             | 50%      | June      | October  | Determine if an Intranet is the most effective mode of communication for staff               | Staff who are working remotely are using Slack as an intranet/quick communication tool. An option would be to expand this to all staff   |          |
| Explore options and if appropriate implement a fixed asset management system   |        | Mario/Julie       | 75%      | September | November | Manage all fixed assets from a central location<br><br>Keep track of asset life cycles       | All assets logged including purchase dates, life cycle, locations, notes (repairs), tracked centrally  |          |
| Consolidate staff training resources into an online Learning Management System ensuring consistent onboarding and self-directed learning for staff   |        | Ashley/Jodi/Maida | 25%      | January   | November | Establish staff base lines for onboarding<br><br>Better prepared and well informed staff     | Prototype ready for initial testing with staff (March)<br><br>Working to develop a capacity of modules for launch.   |          |
| Review current Procurement policy and align with Town to receive economies of scale  |        | Julie             | 90%      | April     | October  | Ensure cost efficiencies achieved  | Approval to access Town standing offers for notable cost savings and efficiency; will include in revised procurement policy  |          |

| 2020 GOALS   | ACTION | RESPONSIBLE       | STATUS % | START    | END      | SUCCESS MEASURE                                     | NOTES  | ACHIEVED |
|--|--------|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|---|--|----------|
| Centralized Library schedules and payroll for cost effective utilization of resources and consistent methodology |        | Julie             | 75%      | January  | December | Optimize staff utilization<br>Alignment with Town   | Align with Town HRIS ADP system currently in the implementation phase  |          |
| Conduct a scheduling software needs assessment   |        | Julie/Jodi/Ashley |          | July     | November | Survey to determine scheduling requirements         | Frontline managers to develop “must haves” list for scheduling requirements  |          |
| Conduct pay equity review with Town of Aurora  |        | Julie             |          | October  | December | Compliance with Pay Equity Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.7 | Pending completion of Town of Aurora compensation review to update salary grids where applicable for Pay Equity male comparators |          |
| Streamline payment process for collection vendors  |        | Julie             | 100%     | February | March    | Reduce staff time spent processing invoices         | Streamlined payment processing for library material vendors  | ✓        |



## Aurora Public Library Board

### REPORT

SR2020.19

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**SUBJECT:** *SECOND QUARTER USE INDICATORS DRAFT REPORT*

**FROM:** Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

**DATE:** *September 16, 2020*

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the *Aurora Public Library Board* receives the *Second Quarter Use Indicators DRAFT Report to June 30, 2020* as information.

The Library closed March 17 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; Virtual programming commenced April 17; Curbside pickup commenced May 25.

Closure of the Library led to an overall decrease in metrics previously measured; new virtual programming and an uptake on social media provided innovative ways of connecting online with the community which will likely continue in parallel to in-library programming when the facility reopens.

#### **BACKGROUND**

One of the Library's chief priorities is to ensure we remain relevant and responsive to our community. A key component of advancing this priority has been to gather, analyze and interpret our quantitative data with the understanding that the numbers do not always reflect the qualitative usage and benefits of library service.

Aurora Public Library has tracked use indicators for many years with the actual indicators evolving over time. New and emerging technologies continue to impact the indicators and serve to demonstrate the diverse nature of customer usage of collections, programs and services.

The Library depends on the reporting of our vendors or site for metrics on streaming and downloads, database use and some social media.

Metrics for programs are provided by Library staff or community partners. Metrics for virtual programs present unique challenges. While we can measure actual attendance through registered platforms like Zoom, analytics for FB and YouTube programs report views of one-minute duration or views of 95% of the program.

APL's use indicators report the one-minute views which over-represents engagement but under-represents viewers potentially watching together. Metrics are taken end-month, so online programs viewed into the next month are not counted

One interesting observation is that virtual programming knows no boundaries and APL programs are being enjoyed by participants beyond York Region, and even Canada.

The Use Indicators serve two important purposes:

- tracking changes and trends in Library use patterns for planning collections, programs and services
- fulfilling the annual reporting requirements of the Province of Ontario for public library boards

The Library Board is provided with quarterly updates of our current use indicators to monitor trends and to plan for future strategic opportunities and developments. Attached is the second quarter summary of the 2020 APL Use Indicators.

### **Some Use Indicator Definitions:**

#### **Circulation**

Circulation includes the number of physical items borrowed/checked out from the Library's collections for use outside of the Library during the given period. Items that are used within the Library that have not been checked out and therefore never physically leave the facility are not included in this total. Circulated items that are renewed are included in this statistic.

Circulation also includes the number of digital items streamed or downloaded by active cardholders during the given period. Digital items include eBooks, eAudiobooks, digital magazines and digital media such as music and movies.

#### **In-Library Use**

In-Library use represents items removed from their usual location and used in the library. The count includes reference materials, circulating materials, magazines and newspapers.

#### **Holds**

Holds is an aggregate of both physical and digital materials. Physical holds represent items not currently available (in-use or on order) or materials the cardholder reserves remotely for staff to retrieve from the shelves as a customer service. Digital holds represent eBooks and eAudiobooks purchased by APL on cloudLibrary that currently are in use.

#### **Courses**

Included in this metric are both registered courses (e.g. Gale online learning and Lynda.com) and courses in database format (e.g. Mango language learning). In September 2019 Lynda.com changed to LinkedIn Learning requiring a LinkedIn account for access.

#### **Public Workstation Usage**

This metric reflects the number of times a customer logs in during the given period. The amount of time that the public workstation is used is not reflected in this statistic.

### **Wireless Internet Usage**

This metric reflects the number of times visitors utilized the free wireless network during the given period. The amount of time that the wireless network is used is not reflected in this statistic.

### **Facebook Reach**

This metric defines Reach when the post is shown in a News Feed, either directly or through a liking or sharing of the post.

### **Online Followers**

This metric combines Followers on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

### **Library Programs**

A program is a planned presentation, program or event given at a scheduled time in the library facility or in the community. New categories of All Ages and One-on-One (instructional) programs were added January 2019.

In April 2020 the category of Virtual Programs was added to the use indicators.

### **Outreach**

Outreach includes exhibits/displays and promotional library booth at events, festivals, agencies and schools.

### **Volunteer Services**

Volunteer Services includes the total number of hours provided by high school students and Visiting Library Service (VLS) volunteers. An estimate of two hours per visit (to include material selection, delivery and interaction between client and volunteer) is allotted to each VLS transaction.

Volunteer services was enhanced in 2019 to include assistance at Library events; also a change was made to count actual hours rather than people (March 2019).

### **In-Person Visits**

Gate counters at the Yonge Street and Parking Lot entrances capture the number of visitors entering the facility.

### **Library Membership**

Membership is defined as the number of library cardholders who have used the card in the past two years. This metric is taken as a snapshot at the end of the given period. While the Library encourages each member to have a personal library card, families often share one or two cards among them.

### **Community Use Statistics**

A comparison of metrics indicates an overall annual decrease in Circulation of 38.1%. Circulation of print materials decreased 45.3%; audio/visual decreased 51.3%; Streaming & Downloads increased 1.3%.

Q2 showed an increase of 9.1% in Streaming & Downloads as a result of the virtual environment and enhanced promotion.

Holds decreased 22.6% in part due to the closure; in part due to the change from OverDrive to cloudLibrary where holds can only be put on circulating APL materials.



Digital products show combined popularity in usage with products showing a range of use. A comparison with 2019 shows Streaming & Downloads increased 1.3% with the strongest gains in Hoopla of 20.9% (increased funding was allocated during the pandemic) and Zinio up 10.5%.

Staff continues to monitor the popularity of individual products to ensure that APL's offerings match customer preferences.

Electronic services (that includes public workstation and wifi usage) is down 30.3%; Online learning (both registered courses and those accessed through database format) increased 46.8% annually and 98.8% in Q2.

Facebook Total Reach shows an increase of 32.8%; Online Followers (Twitter, Facebook & Instagram) increased 32.7%. Social media statistics are difficult to measure due to analytics provided by sites; also by what is being measured and offered over Facebook were largely responsible to this increase.

Q2 includes new metrics for Virtual Programs and Attendance. These metrics present unique challenges. While we can measure actual attendance through a registered program over Zoom (e.g. Writers' Group) attendance at a Virtual Storytime is measured by one-minute views on Facebook. While it is important to recognize that accurate comparisons cannot be made between live and virtual programming, in Q2 APL delivered 107 programs with attendance of 2621, keeping the community engaged during the closure and likely reaching new audiences.

Volunteer Services are down 91.3% due to APL's closure (teens) and volunteers and clients of the Visiting Library Services hesitant about the safety of delivering material.

### **Library Membership**

Membership (30,759) is up 9.7%. APL offers temporary digital library cards and virtual full registration during our closure.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. APL Second Quarter Use Indicators 2020

***Assisted by Reccia Mandelcorn, Manager, Community Collaboration***

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*Bruce Gorman*  
*Chief Executive Officer*



## Comparatives Quarter Use Indicators

**Period: April - June 2020**

|                           | 2020<br>Quarter | 2019<br>Quarter | % chg         | 2020<br>YTD    | 2019<br>YTD    | % chg         |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| <b><u>Circulation</u></b> |                 |                 |               |                |                |               |
| 1. Print                  | 18,269          | 113,948         | -84.0%        | 126,292        | 230,977        | -45.3%        |
| 2. Audio/Visual           | 2,762           | 27,978          | -90.1%        | 29,038         | 59,625         | -51.3%        |
| 3. Streaming & Downloads  | 35,531          | 32,578          | 9.1%          | 63,566         | 62,727         | 1.3%          |
| 4. Miscellaneous          | 6               | 37              | -83.8%        | 22             | 58             | -62.1%        |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>56,568</b>   | <b>174,541</b>  | <b>-67.6%</b> | <b>218,918</b> | <b>353,387</b> | <b>-38.1%</b> |

|                       |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>In-Library Use</b> | 0      | 9,441  |        | 6,902  | 22,051 | -68.7% |
| <b>Holds</b>          | 25,238 | 30,063 | -16.0% | 47,848 | 61,785 | -22.6% |

### **Electronic Services**

|                                   |               |               |               |                |                |               |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Catalogue Logins               | 26,691        | 43,848        | -39.1%        | 71,820         | 83,027         | -13.5%        |
| 2. Electronic Database Sessions * | 13,119        | 34,563        | -62.0%        | 23,667         | 43,460         | -45.5%        |
| 3. Courses                        | 1,610         | 810           | 98.8%         | 2,285          | 1,557          | 46.8%         |
| 4. Public Workstation Usage       | 0             | 8,116         |               | 6,745          | 15,747         | -57.2%        |
| 5. Wireless Internet Usage        | 449           | 11,355        | -96.0%        | 11,109         | 22,202         | -50.0%        |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>41,869</b> | <b>98,692</b> | <b>-57.6%</b> | <b>115,626</b> | <b>165,993</b> | <b>-30.3%</b> |

|                                |         |        |        |         |         |        |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| <b>Website Visits</b>          | 51,569  | 77,990 | -33.9% | 134,047 | 157,127 | -14.7% |
| <b>eNewsletter Subscribers</b> | 7,551   | 7,585  | -0.4%  | 7,551   | 7,585   | -0.4%  |
| <b>Facebook Total Reach **</b> | 101,959 | 67,542 | 51.0%  | 166,080 | 125,061 | 32.8%  |
| <b>Online Followers **</b>     | 3,424   | 2,581  | 32.7%  | 3,424   | 2,581   | 32.7%  |

### **Programs**

#### **Sessions (In Library)**

|                 |          |            |  |            |            |               |
|-----------------|----------|------------|--|------------|------------|---------------|
| Youth           | 0        | 182        |  | 195        | 368        | -47.0%        |
| Adult           | 0        | 136        |  | 103        | 218        | -52.8%        |
| All Ages        | 0        | 2          |  | 12         | 8          | 50.0%         |
| One-on-One      | 0        | 0          |  | 0          | 0          |               |
| <b>Subtotal</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>320</b> |  | <b>310</b> | <b>594</b> | <b>-47.8%</b> |

#### **Sessions (In the Community)**

|                 |          |            |  |            |            |               |
|-----------------|----------|------------|--|------------|------------|---------------|
| Youth           | 0        | 20         |  | 4          | 40         | -90.0%        |
| Adult           | 0        | 12         |  | 15         | 34         | -55.9%        |
| All Ages        | 0        | 0          |  | 0          | 0          |               |
| <b>Subtotal</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>32</b>  |  | <b>19</b>  | <b>74</b>  | <b>-74.3%</b> |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>0</b> | <b>352</b> |  | <b>329</b> | <b>668</b> | <b>-50.7%</b> |

#### **Sessions (Virtual)**

|                 |            |            |               |            |            |               |
|-----------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Preschool       | 28         | n/a        |               | 28         | n/a        |               |
| Children        | 23         | n/a        |               | 23         | n/a        |               |
| Young Adult     | 10         | n/a        |               | 10         | n/a        |               |
| Adult           | 46         | n/a        |               | 46         | n/a        |               |
| All Ages        | 0          | n/a        |               | 0          | n/a        |               |
| <b>Subtotal</b> | <b>107</b> | <b>0</b>   |               | <b>107</b> | <b>0</b>   |               |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>107</b> | <b>352</b> | <b>-69.6%</b> | <b>436</b> | <b>668</b> | <b>-34.7%</b> |

## Comparatives Quarter Use Indicators

Period: 2020

|  | 2020<br>Quarter | 2019<br>Quarter | % chg  | 2020<br>YTD  | 2019<br>YTD   | % chg  |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|--------|--------------|---------------|--------|
| <b>Attendance (In Library) ***</b>       |                 |                 |        |              |               |        |
| Youth                                    | 0               | 4329            |        | 3973         | 8519          | -63.7% |
| Adult                                    | 0               | 1,978           |        | 1,103        | 3,042         | -1.7%  |
| All Ages                                 | 0               | 223             |        | 636          | 647           |        |
| One-on-One                               | 0               | 0               |        | 0            | 0             | -53.2% |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                          | <b>0</b>        | <b>6,530</b>    |        | <b>5,712</b> | <b>12,208</b> | -53.2% |
| <b>Attendance (In the Community) ***</b> |                 |                 |        |              |               |        |
| Youth                                    | 0               | 1973            |        | 83           | 2682          | -96.9% |
| Adult                                    | 0               | 199             |        | 303          | 516           | -41.3% |
| All Ages                                 | 0               | 0               |        | 0            | 0             |        |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                          | <b>0</b>        | <b>2,172</b>    |        | <b>386</b>   | <b>3,198</b>  | -87.9% |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>0</b>        | <b>8,702</b>    |        | <b>6,098</b> | <b>15,406</b> | -60.4% |
| <b>Attendance (Virtual) ****</b>         |                 |                 |        |              |               |        |
| Preschool                                | 839             | n/a             |        | 839          | n/a           |        |
| Children                                 | 319             | n/a             |        | 319          | n/a           |        |
| Young Adult                              | 143             | n/a             |        | 143          | n/a           |        |
| Adult                                    | 1,320           | n/a             |        | 1,320        | n/a           |        |
| All Ages                                 | 0               | n/a             |        | 0            | n/a           |        |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                          | <b>2,621</b>    | <b>0</b>        |        | <b>2,621</b> | <b>0</b>      |        |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>2,621</b>    | <b>8,702</b>    | -69.9% | <b>8,719</b> | <b>15,406</b> | -43.4% |
| <b>Outreach</b>                          | 0               | 7               |        | 2            | 8.00          | -75.0% |
| <b>Volunteer Services</b>                | 8               | 272             | -97.1% | 162          | 529           | -69.4% |
| <b>In-Library Visits</b>                 | 0               | 63,674          |        | 49,343       | 130,474       | -62.2% |
| <b>Library Membership</b>                | 30,759          | 28,029          | 9.7%   | 30,759       | 28,029        | 9.7%   |

\* Metrics for Streaming, Downloads & Electronic Database Sessions provided by Vendor

\*\* Metrics for Social Media provided from social media sites

\*\*\* Metrics for attendance provided by staff, facilitators and community partners

\*\*\*\* Metrics taken from a combination of views on Facebook, Livestream & YouTube (1 min. views) & Zoom registrations

DLR 9/9/20



## Aurora Public Library Board

### REPORT SR2020.20

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**SUBJECT:** 2020 Mid-Year Financial Report

**FROM:** Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

**DATE:** September 16, 2020

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the *Aurora Public Library Financial Statement for the period ending June 30, 2020* be received.

### **SUMMARY**

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in Aurora Public Library providing alternative service delivery initiatives to the community such as online programs, curbside pickup services and reserved in person public computer workstation use.

The attached Financial Statement for the period ending June 30, 2020 shows total expenditures to date at 41% of the annual operating budget.

These statements are prepared on a modified accrual basis, which differs from the year-end audited financial statement, which includes adjustments for tangible capital asset depreciation in accordance with the Public Sector Accounting Board. This method of presentation is consistent with that of the Town of Aurora financial reporting and budget approval processes.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

This report outlines significant in-year operating variances for the period ending June 30, 2019:

- Unspent salaries and benefits as a result of employees placed on declared emergency leave due to provincial closures of public libraries and a staggered re-entry approach of staff returning to the work force
- Cataloguing and processing services are lower than anticipated as the collection trends move towards more digital content
- Programming, public relations and staff training budgets will be underspent
- Professional fees will exceed budget as a result of ongoing negotiations
- Revenue loss is forecasted at \$80,000 by year end
- Provincial operating and pay equity grants will be received in the 3rd quarter

APL is projecting an operating year-end surplus of approximately \$600,000 should present operations and hours of service remain unchanged.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Year-end Library operating surpluses normally transfers to the Library General Capital Reserve, however, given the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 operating surplus will be returned to the Town of Aurora as previously approved by the Library Board.

***Attachment: Financial Statement for the period ending June 30, 2020***

***Assisted by: Julie Rocca, Business Manager***

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*Bruce Gorman*

*Chief Executive Officer*

**Aurora Public Library  
Financial Statement**

| <b>For the period ending June 30, 2020</b> | <b>Annual<br/>Budget</b> | <b>Prior YTD<br/>Actuals</b> | <b>Actuals<br/>YTD</b> | <b>Balance</b>     | <b>Actuals<br/>% of<br/>Budget</b> | <b>Yr End<br/>Forecast</b> |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                            |                          |                              |                        |                    |                                    |                            |
| <b>Operating Expenses</b>                  |                          |                              |                        |                    |                                    |                            |
| Salaries & Benefits                        | \$3,140,742              | \$1,370,352                  | \$1,192,141            | \$1,948,601        | 38.0%                              | \$2,500,000                |
| Collections                                | 365,000                  | 198,287                      | 185,515                | 179,485            | 50.8%                              | 365,000                    |
| Cataloguing and Processing Services        | 63,000                   | 31,907                       | 22,200                 | 40,800             | 35.2%                              | 45,000                     |
| IT Contracts, Equipment & Licenses         | 147,000                  | 99,930                       | 108,701                | 38,299             | 73.9%                              | 150,000                    |
| Programs                                   | 30,000                   | 11,436                       | 4,330                  | 25,670             | 14.4%                              | 10,000                     |
| Public Relations                           | 25,000                   | 6,808                        | 6,328                  | 18,672             | 25.3%                              | 10,000                     |
| Office Supplies, Equipment & Telephone     | 47,000                   | 21,671                       | 17,545                 | 29,455             | 37.3%                              | 45,000                     |
| Staff Development & Board Training         | 24,500                   | 6,285                        | 5,049                  | 19,451             | 20.6%                              | 10,000                     |
| Professional Fees                          | 17,700                   | - 4,026                      | 18,881                 | - 1,181            | 106.7%                             | 50,000                     |
| Business Plan Initiatives                  | 20,000                   | -                            | 19,020                 | 980                | 95.1%                              | 20,000                     |
| Unclassified / Contingency                 | 3,000                    | 898                          | 127                    | 2,874              | 4.2%                               | 2,000                      |
|  | <b>3,882,942</b>         | <b>1,743,549</b>             | <b>1,579,837</b>       | <b>2,303,105</b>   | <b>40.7%</b>                       | <b>3,207,000</b>           |
| <b>Contribution to Capital Reserve</b>     | 130,000                  | 65,000                       | 65,000                 | 65,000             | 50.0%                              | 130,000                    |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>                      | <b>4,012,942</b>         | <b>1,808,549</b>             | <b>1,644,837</b>       | <b>2,368,105</b>   | <b>41.0%</b>                       | <b>3,337,000</b>           |
| <b>REVENUE</b>                             |                          |                              |                        |                    |                                    |                            |
| <b>General Revenue</b>                     |                          |                              |                        |                    |                                    |                            |
| Fines                                      | 40,000                   | 20,268                       | 6,066                  | 33,934             | 15.2%                              | 6,122                      |
| Fees                                       | 26,320                   | 13,589                       | 5,322                  | 20,998             | 20.2%                              | 5,396                      |
| Sales                                      | 32,400                   | 19,865                       | 10,025                 | 22,375             | 30.9%                              | 8,268                      |
| Interest and Other                         | 700                      | 296                          | 424                    | 276                | 60.6%                              | 500                        |
|  | <b>99,420</b>            | <b>54,018</b>                | <b>21,837</b>          | <b>77,583</b>      | <b>22.0%</b>                       | <b>20,286</b>              |
| <b>Grant Revenue</b>                       |                          |                              |                        |                    |                                    |                            |
| Provincial Library Operating Grant (PLOC)  | 44,138                   | -                            | -                      | 44,138             | 0.0%                               | 44,138                     |
| Pay Equity Grant                           | 1,284                    | -                            | -                      | 1,284              | 0.0%                               | 1,284                      |
|  | <b>45,422</b>            | <b>-</b>                     | <b>-</b>               | <b>45,422</b>      | <b>0.0%</b>                        | <b>45,422</b>              |
| <b>Total General and Grant Revenue</b>     | <b>144,842</b>           | <b>54,018</b>                | <b>21,837</b>          | <b>123,005</b>     | <b>15.1%</b>                       | <b>65,708</b>              |
| <b>Municipal Requisition</b>               | <b>3,868,100</b>         | <b>1,754,531</b>             | <b>1,622,999</b>       | <b>2,245,101</b>   | <b>42.0%</b>                       | <b>3,271,292</b>           |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>                       | <b>\$4,012,942</b>       | <b>\$1,808,549</b>           | <b>\$1,644,837</b>     | <b>\$2,368,105</b> | <b>41.0%</b>                       | <b>\$3,337,000</b>         |



## Aurora Public Library Board

### REPORT SR2020.21

**SUBJECT:** 2021 LIBRARY BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

**FROM:** Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

**DATE:** September 16, 2020

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the *2021 Library Board Meeting Schedule* be approved.

### **BACKGROUND**

Traditionally Library Board meetings are scheduled the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month between January and June and September and December. Earlier in 2020, the provincial government passed legislation that reduced the number of library board meetings required per year. As a result of this new legislation and after consultation with the Board at the February 2020 meeting, this report implements the recommended eight (8) Aurora Public Library Board meetings for 2021.

Library staff suggest removing the January and March meetings from the Board's calendar.

Past practice also proposes a date change for the December Board meeting. The Board may wish to consider meeting the second week of December to avoid potential conflicts with members' seasonal commitments.

| Schedule Date                           | Date Change                        | Time      |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Wednesday, February 17, 2021            |                                    | 7:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday, April 21, 2021               |                                    | 7:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday, May 19, 2021                 |                                    | 7:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday, June 16, 2021                |                                    | 7:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday, September 15, 2021           |                                    | 7:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday, October 20, 2021             |                                    | 7:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday, November 17, 2021            |                                    | 7:00 p.m. |
| <del>Wednesday, December 15, 2021</del> | <b>Wednesday, December 8, 2021</b> | 7:00 p.m. |

***Assisted by: Maida Rae, Human Resources Coordinator/Executive Assistant***

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*Bruce Gorman*  
*Chief Executive Officer*





## **Aurora Public Library Board**

### **REPORT SR2020.22**

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**SUBJECT: Library Service Hours Report**

**FROM:** Bruce Gorman, C.E.O.

**DATE:** September 16, 2020

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board approve the following change to Library service hours as follows:

1. Mondays – Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Like many businesses and services, Aurora Public Library operational hours require adjustment in the wake of the ongoing global pandemic.

On March 17, 2020, Aurora Public Library complied with the provincial decree to close to the public to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Library staff were quick to adapt to this new reality and have successfully adapted existing programs and services to appeal to the community in a virtual environment.

In May, 2020, curbside pick-up service was introduced to help Library customers once again access our collection. Our curbside pick-up service runs 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday to Saturday, averaging 17 customers per hour.

On August 17, 2020, APL began permitting onsite computer use for customers Monday to Saturday from 12 p.m. – 5 p.m. These reduced hours are a reflection of the additional staff required for customer screening and supervision, increased sanitation efforts required for safety and smaller overall demand for this particular service.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Staff recommend adjusting operating hours to reflect the current service hours of Monday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. for the foreseeable future. The Library's management team continues to monitor demand from our community and compare our current offerings with local and comparable Library systems. We are confident that Aurora Public Library is meeting the community's demands and can continue to adapt to provide safe and efficient library services.

*Assisted by: Maida Rae, HR Coordinator/EA*

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*Bruce Gorman  
Chief Executive Officer*



## **Aurora Public Library Board**

### **REPORT SR2020.23**

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**SUBJECT:** Aurora Public Library 2019 Annual Report

**FROM:** Bruce Gorman, C.E.O.

**DATE:** September 16, 2020

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the *Aurora Public Library 2019 Annual Report* be received.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Typically an organization summarizes its annual activity and presents it to the public in the form of an annual report. Traditionally the Aurora Public Library has provided that information through two separate documents, the Operations Update and the Annual Use Indicators.

Attached is the annual report that consolidates the 2019 information as previously received by the Library Board. This overview is presented to the community showcasing performance highlights and financial allocations.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Aurora Public Library 2019 Annual Report is attached. This report summarizing the Aurora Public Library highlights of 2019 will be posted on our website and shared electronically. It can also be printed when requested.

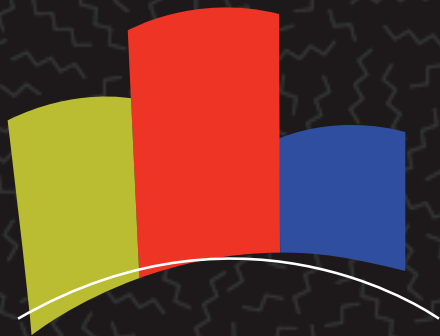
#### **ATTACHEMENT**

1. APL 2019 Annual Report

***Assisted by: Maida Rae, Human Resources Coordinator/EA***

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*Bruce Gorman*  
*Chief Executive Officer*



AURORA  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

ANNUAL  
REPORT

2019

PLACE OF  
POSSIBILITIES



**Bruce Gorman**  
Chief Executive Officer

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Reflecting upon 2019, it is with great pride that I share some of the highlights we've accomplished together in this most extraordinary year. With our interior renovation project completed, we welcomed you to a modern, people-centered space that we hoped would delight and inspire creativity, community and learning. Your responses to the new Creative Studio, Multi-Purpose Room, flexible seating areas and open living room confirmed that we understood what residents wanted from their public library and that we delivered refreshed, exciting spaces that would be enjoyed and well-used.

### Significant 2019 trends include:

- In-Library use increased 24.8%
- Programs increased 37.9%
- Electronic services increased 18.1%
- Attendance increased 38.8%
- Online followers increased 57.1%
- Library membership increased 13.5%

The Board and staff are grateful for your ongoing support and remain committed to building collections, services and spaces that provide the tools and the inspiration for our community to thrive in our ever-changing world.





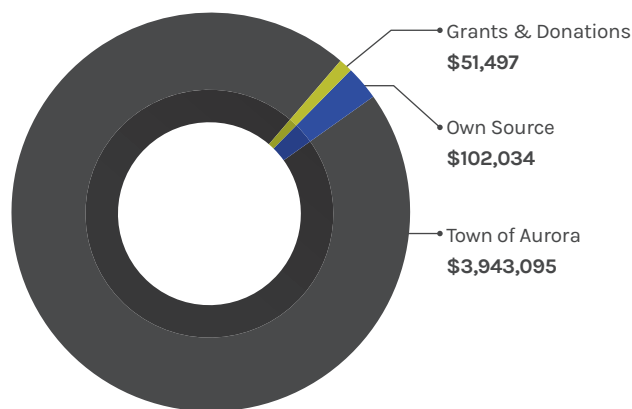
**Aurora Public Library Board 2018-2022**

Councillor Harold Kim, Adam Mobbs (Vice Chair), John Clement, Ken Turriff, Marie Rankel  
Bruce Gorman (Secretary/Treasurer & CEO), Councillor Sandra Humfries, Tom Connor (Chair)

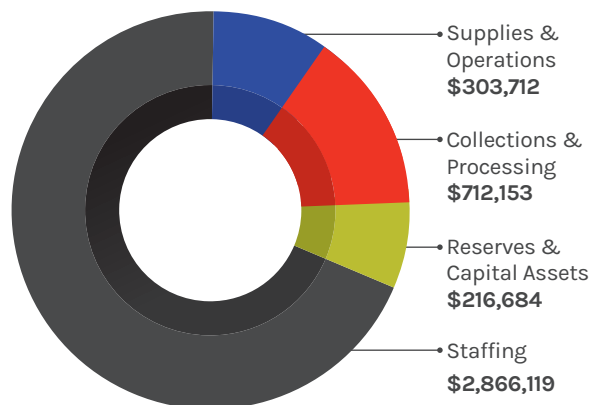
## 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- Interior renovations were completed with the addition of a Creative Studio, providing access to a wide range of tools and resources supporting DIY culture and innovation.
- The Scholars' Hub Speaker Series, a new partnership with York University, presented Dr. Ruth Koleszar-Green speaking on the relationships between the colonial governments and Indigenous Peoples.
- Literary events featured activist Judy Rebick, musician Dave Bidini, author Camilla Gibb and an evening with three Poet Laureates including George Elliott Clarke
- Innovation and technology was leveraged with new programs such as Girls Who Code, Introduction to Cricut & Design Space and an overnight high school Hackathon
- Civic engagement was encouraged through a Meet & Greet with candidates seeking seats in the federal election
- Barriers were eliminate through the removal of overdue fines on children's print materials and gender identification from customer registration
- Collaborations with organizations including Art Not Shame, York Region Food Network, York Chamber Ensemble & The Aurora Winter Blues Festival created diverse cultural opportunities
- A new "Read and Bead" incentive was a popular addition to the TD Summer Reading Club resulting in increased participation

## REVENUE



## EXPENDITURES



# 2019

## BY THE NUMBERS

**730,147** Circulation

**262,520** In-person visits

**48,180** Unique logins to wireless networks

**34,276** Sessions at public computer workstations

**25,064** Information questions answered \*annual survey estimate

**31,372** Program attendees

**1,345** Programs

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# THE AURORED

*Aurora's Community Newspaper*

Vol. 20 No. 35 905-727-3300

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Week of June 18, 2020



Tireless community volunteer Tom Connor proudly displays his 2020 Citizen of the Year trophy on Monday night after being surprised with the honour virtually at the Town's Community Recognition Awards. Full coverage of the 2020 Community Recognition Awards begins on Page 21.

**Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

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## "Make sure you share what you have"

### Tom Connor named 2020 Citizen of the Year

By Brock Weir

Tom Connor's mother instilled with him from a young age that you have to share what you have with the world around you.

It's a simple philosophy, but it's one that has stuck with him throughout his life, including the past 47 years living in Aurora.

They were words that echoed through his mind on Monday night as he was named Aurora's 2020 Citizen of the Year.

Mr. Connor received the honour at the Town's Community Recognition Awards hosted June 15 by Mayor Tom Mrakas – held virtually due to restrictions surrounding COVID-19.

Watching the ceremony virtually with his wife Barb while enjoying a meal at another couple's home, Mr. Connor says he was surprised as Mayor Mrakas read out the many accomplishments of the incumbent Citizen of the Year. As it slowly dawned on him that he was being recognized, he had no inkling friends and well-wishers were gathering outside

for a socially distant celebration.

The Connors moved to Aurora in 1973. Almost straight from the outset, Mr. Connor set out to make a difference in the community he now called home.

A leader in local sports, a champion for the Aurora Public Library, and a passionate volunteer on behalf of residents in need, most recently with Martha's Table, a weekly meal program for vulnerable and isolated members of the community organized by Welcoming Arms and St. Andrew's Presbyterian

**Continued on page 23**

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**Aurora set to "re-open" on Friday**

By Brock Weir

Businesses across Aurora will be able to re-open starting this Friday as York Region moves into the second stage of Ontario's plan to get back up and running.

York Region on Monday was one of seven areas given the green light to head into Stage 2 of the re-opening plan as several jurisdictions outside of the Golden Horseshoe were given the go-

**Continued on page 20**

**DRIVE-BY PRIDE** – The COVID-19 pandemic may have scuttled plans for a traditional Pride Parade this year, but organizers rallied Sunday for a socially-distant celebration: a drive-by Pride event that proceeded down Yonge Street from Newmarket.

**Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

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# Citizen of the Year has touched countless lives in Aurora

From page 1

Church, he has touched the lives of many over the decades.

“He is a devoted volunteer giving his time over the past four decades to various organizations in Aurora such as the Aurora Minor Hockey Association, Aurora Youth Soccer, the Optimist Club of Aurora, the Town’s Committee of Adjustment, the Aurora Public Library Board, and Martha’s Table to name a few,” said Mayor Mrakas before the big reveal.

After announcing this year’s honoree, the Mayor continued: “Tom’s compassion, dedication and commitment to our Town is inspiring. His lifelong goal of giving back to others shows us the importance of volunteering and the positive impact on our community. Over the years, Tom has built a network of volunteers, community connections and neighbourhood resources and, most of all, lifelong friends.

“Your drive to serve and better the lives of others gives us hope, especially in times like this, where hope and positive contributions to our fellow neighbours and friends will help us move forward through adversity and instill much needed change.”

One such member of Mr. Connor’s network of lifelong friends is former Citizen of the Year Steve Hinder, who, along with wife Jane, invited the Connors over for a meal at the start of the week, subtly suggesting they sit down to watch the Community Recognition Awards together.

“To me, Tom exemplifies exactly what Citizen of the Year means,” said Mr. Hinder. “It is someone who has given a lifetime of volunteering and giving back to the Town. Tom has done it so quietly. He never talks about it. He even still has a flip phone, so he’s not a social media guy! He’s not about posting or boasting about anything that he does. It has never been his style.”

In fact, Mr. Hinder notes Tom and Barb Connor met while volunteering with a youth drop-in centre in Toronto, so volunteering is a cornerstone of his life.

“The things that a lot of parents do in terms of getting engaged in sports and leisure activities for the kids,” shared Mr. Hinder. “Tom was more than a coach; he became the President of Aurora Youth Soccer for a year. The boys were playing hockey and he recognized there was nothing around for them at a young age, so he approached then-Mayor Dick Illingworth and Dick said, ‘Yeah, I can support this, but you need to run it.’ Tom said, ‘Okay,’ and actually started the recreational hockey program that in



As Mayor Mrakas is in self-isolation and did the honours virtually, Councillor Harold Kim was on hand to personally award the hardware.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

1988 the Optimists took over and it grew from there.

“Over the last few years, he has been involved with Martha’s Table. He never told me any of this stuff. That is the thing about him. We saw each other at least every couple of weeks. He’s not one to say, ‘Hey, here’s what I’m doing,’ but it would be Barb who would say something about Tom helping with this neat program every Thursday at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church called Martha’s Table and he helps organize the lunch there.’ A couple of years ago at Neighbourhood Network, we were going around to visit different organizations during National Volunteer Week. We dropped off coffees to say thank you to volunteers. I really didn’t know anything about that program, but I walked in and – boom, there he was. I know this guy really well and he didn’t tell me anything about this.”

But, for Tom Connor, volunteering is just something one does – and, in his case, it is something he has always done.

“When I grew up, it was one of those things where you said, ‘Okay, who is going to organize it?’ and people said, ‘Let Tom do it,’ so, I have always done it,” Mr. Connor told the gathered crowd, which included Councillors Harold Kim, who formally presented Mr. Connor with his trophy on behalf of the self-isolating Mayor, Councillor Sandra Humfries, Bruce Gorman, CEO of the Aurora Public Library, and former mayor Tim Jones. “For me, volunteering is a thing you should do.

It is what you have to do to make your community strong and what you need to do to make your community great.

“My mother always used to say, ‘The one thing you need to do is make sure

you share what you have.’ Barb and I have always wanted to do stuff and both of us have worked on things and, to me, this is just a wonderful thing.”





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Citizen of the Year Tom Connor is pictured celebrating the moment with wife Barb.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir



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## Reopening of recreation centres, Library begin to take shape

On Friday, kids took another step towards a return to normalcy, once again being allowed to beat the heat at splash pads in parks across Aurora.

But it will be a number of weeks before other recreational and public facilities are open to the public, it was decided last week.

Splash pads and public washrooms in parks are the latest amenities to be re-opened under Stage 2 of the Province's plan to gear up following mass closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“With the announcement of Aurora moving to Stage 2 of the Province's reopening plan, Town facilities, amenities and local businesses can begin to move forward and start to open with a phased-in approach,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas last week. “Our main focus is the safety of the public and staff. The Town will ensure it takes every precaution and considers all health considerations when making the necessary arrangements to open other facilities and resume services in the weeks ahead.

“The pandemic is not over and we must all still continue to follow the health guidelines and advice from officials to ensure our amenities continue to stay open.”

Sports fields will be the next slate of amenities to re-open for use on July 6.

Come Monday, permits will again be issued based on seasonal requests from sports groups but the fields will be permitted for training only. No games will be allowed. There will be no line painting for sports such as soccer, nor will turf mowing be determined on height. Instead, mowing, grooming and field inspections will take place on a weekly basis.

Allowing the Aurora Public Library to move from its current curbside pickup model to opening its doors to pick-up and drop-off of materials while allowing residents to access services like computers and photocopiers is slated for “early July” although no specific date has been assigned just yet. Once opened, however, patrons will not be permitted to handle books or materials on shelves, nor will they be allowed onto the second floor. Hours will be limited and computer access will be by reservation. Curbside service will continue.

The re-opening of public pools will be staggered.

The pool at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex is currently slated to re-open for private lessons, lane swims, aquatic sports, and aquafit classes – with limits on the number of participants – on July 20, with the pool at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex set for a September re-opening.

In order to achieve this, change rooms will be “closely monitored, cleaned and disinfected to maintain standards” while no spectators will be allowed poolside. Hot tubs and spas will remain closed.

Ice pad play is currently scheduled to resume with the issuing of permits in August. Up to three ice pads will be opened in this first stage for training only. No games will be allowed, and there will be no access to dressing rooms or for spectators. There will be a limit of 10 people per ice pad with the remaining pads set to re-open in the late summer or early fall “pending Stage 3 reopening.”

Remaining closed for the foreseeable future will be playgrounds, indoor walking tracks, the Club Aurora fitness centre, squash courts, the rock-climbing wall at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex and meeting rooms within each of the recreation facilities.

Also remaining closed to the public for the foreseeable future are the Joint Operations Centre on Industrial Parkway North and Town Hall itself.

At Town Hall, a minimal number of staff will work on site until September, but business continues: all planning and building permit applications will still be accepted and processed while marriage licenses, lottery licenses and other applications will be processed by appointment only. Residents remain encouraged to continue to make payments to the Town online or by dropping a cheque into the mail slot at the entrance of Town Hall.

“The ability to start up any facility, program or amenity requires evaluation of the Provincial orders, guidelines, and the ability to implement with current resources (personnel or equipment needs), development of new policies/procedures, communication to the public and user groups, and evaluating the feasibility of starting up (cost and resource implications),” said Robin McDougall, Aurora's Director of Community Services, in a report to Council last week. “All this takes time to ensure we cover everything and meet public health's approval. Staff recognize the public's interest in getting back to normal as soon as possible; therefore, we're working diligently to meet expectations while maintaining safety as our top priority. Regardless of when the facility, program or amenity is opened, the public will need to be diligent about personal hygiene and sanitation as it is not practical or possible for the Town to ensure that all sites are sanitized at all times.”

## **WHERE THINGS STAND ON COVID-19**

Aurora-wide, the rate of new cases of COVID-19 remains encouraging, with the number of active cases entering single digits at the start of the week.

At press time, there were a total of 8 active cases within Aurora and 92 cases deemed resolved and recovered for a total of 115 confirmed cases.

15 Aurora residents have lost the battle against the virus.

Of the 115 total cases, 55 are attributed to institutional outbreak, 27 to close contact, 20 to local transmission, 11 to travel, and two related to a workplace cluster.

Region-wide, as of Tuesday evening, there are 322 active cases, 246 deaths, and 2,421 recoveries, for a total of 2,989.

# Former Citizen of the Year honoured by Governor General



Brian North, Centre, is pictured at the 2018 Run for Southlake with participants from Aurora – including Councillor Sandra Humfries, then-mayor Geoff Dawe and incumbent Mayor Tom Mrakas. Rideau Hall announced Mr. North as one of more than 100 “remarkable Canadians” who will receive medals for their services to the country over the coming year. He will be honoured for his work with Southlake Regional Health Centre and the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

By Brock Weir

Aurora resident Brian North will receive the Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers. Mr. North was one of 123 “remarkable Canadians” whose honours were recognized by Governor General Julie Payette to mark Canada Day last week. Mr. North, who has been instrumental in the development of the Nature’s Emporium Run for Southlake and numerous other community initiatives, including the rebuilding efforts of Aurora United Church, will receive the medal “for his volunteer service to his

community since 2001, notably with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation.” The Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers recognizes the remarkable volunteer achievements of Canadians from across the country in a wide range of fields. As an official Canadian honour, the Medal pays tribute to the dedication and exemplary commitment of volunteers. Recipients will receive their honours at ceremonies when present circumstances surrounding the global pandemic permit.



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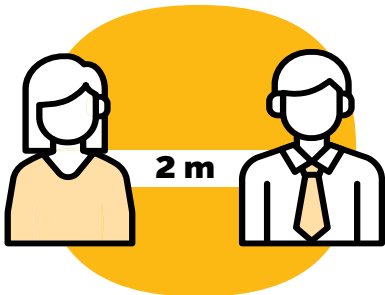
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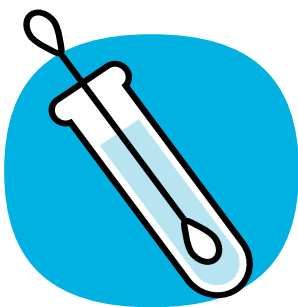
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**Get tested** if you are worried you may have COVID-19, or have been exposed to the virus.

**Inside or out, stay safe. Save lives.**



# York University continues Scholar’s Hub program “@Home”



York University Associate Professor Dr. Ruth Koleszar-Green helped kick off the Scholar’s Hub, a partnership between the University and the Aurora Public Library last fall. Now, the Scholar’s Hub is resuming online, rebranded as Scholar’s Hub @Home.

By Brock Weir

The definition of “democracy” – along with rights and freedoms in a rapidly changing world – have recently been hot-button issues in this uncertain time.

In fact, they were issues due to be tackled at the Aurora Public Library (APL) this past April as the Library and York University planned to host the second lecture in their Scholar’s Hub partnership launched last fall.

Plans to host a York University professor on the topic of democracy had to be pushed to the backburner as APL was forced to close its doors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the partnership is moving forward in a new way – virtually – in Scholars’ Hub @ Home.

Now a series of webinars, York’s partnership with APL was renewed this Wednesday, July 22, with Exploring the Summer Skies, a talk on astronomy and developments in space research carried out by the university, with future talks – free for everyone, regardless of educational background – resuming on a bi-weekly basis.

“The entire world changed,” says Kairi Williams, Associate Director of Alumni Events for York University. “The challenge then became...how do we still fulfil the organization’s mandate under these new circumstances with the pandemic? That was the question many of us were trying to answer and we’re also trying to answer at York. It really came down to moving, transitioning this in-person experience to a virtual experience. The difference is we actually found a way to do this where it almost didn’t matter where you were in the world, you could be a part of this experience.”

York subsequently pre-recorded two lectures for Scholars’ Hub @ Home, each of which were well-received, as was a third lecture that was livestreamed,

and going live is the order of the day moving forward.

“We have the same premise, which is to deliver lectures from academics from York related to topics that are current, relevant and now,” says Ms. Williams.

From APL’s perspective, they were looking for ways to continue their partnership with York in this “new normal” and they were eager to jump on board with this new virtual format.

“This is an opportunity to be curious and engaged,” says Reccia Mandelcorn, APL’s Manager of Community Collaboration. “It is so important to keep alert with the things that are going on in the world, especially when many of us are not being a part of that world. I love the opportunity that every two weeks, two o’clock on a Wednesday afternoon, people will be able to tune in and listen to a short lecture on something they may have always been interested in or didn’t even know they were interested in. I look at this as not a substitution but a whole different experience.”

As they began looking at transitioning to a virtual world, York was trying to make sense not only of the pandemic itself but how that reality would inform the future. They wanted to look at how the “new normal” was going to impact how people interact, as well as economic and societal impacts. They explored how COVID-19 was impacting mothers, the homeless, and even the “politics of vaccines” and how that will shape the future.

Incidents at home and abroad, including the killing of George Floyd, sparked a discussion on anti-Black racism as well as the Black Lives Matter movement.

“We said, ‘we’ve got to do this too’ because our commitment is to do things that are timely, relevant and just relatable,” says Ms. Williams. “Those two topics basically took us through the Spring...and our highest attended

sessions were those two sessions on anti-Black racism because it really seemed to resonate with people who wanted to know what is going on.

“People aren’t done hearing about COVID, they’re also not done hearing about anti-Black racism.”

While these sessions have proved to be well-attended, this is not the only measure of success being eyed by York and the APL. Although numbers are important, Ms. Mandelcorn says her own personal yardstick is how people may have been challenged and changed at the end of a lecture.

“How have people’s lives been changed? How have they opened up? If one person walked away and was changed and impacted, that’s my measurement,” she says.

Adds Ms. Williams: “This series is part of supporting York’s reputation as being a leading educational institution featuring York’s scholars, whether they be professors or researchers. Just also advancing knowledge and thought leadership within our communities – with people who are sort of surrounding the university either physically or even virtually. Thought leadership, getting people to question and think differently about things, is part of what an educational institution stands for. Tactically, we’re always looking to have more people coming and coming back, but holistically it is about furthering York’s mission to be an inclusive and progressive educational organization.”

For more on Scholars’ Hub @Home, visit [aurorapl.ca](http://aurorapl.ca) or register for upcoming discussions at [yorku.zoom.us/webinar/register](http://yorku.zoom.us/webinar/register). The next lecture will take place Wednesday, August 5, from 12 noon to 12.45 p.m., and will feature Silvia Vasquez Olguin on gardening and food sustainability.

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## The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating...

International Tiger Day  
(July 29, 2020)

International Tiger Day was established in 2010 to raise awareness about tiger conservation due to declining wild tiger populations. Some of the reasons behind declining populations include poaching, illegal trade, habitat loss and climate change. While Aurora isn't home to wild tigers, it is the proud hometown to the Aurora Tigers Junior A Hockey Club! The program pictured here is from the 1962-63 season when the Aurora Tigers played in the old Aurora Memorial Arena on Yonge Street – this was before the Aurora Community Centre was built in the late 1960s. To learn more about how you can support International Tiger Day, visit [bit.ly/2CcE1TR](https://bit.ly/2CcE1TR).



## Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

I was reading an opinion piece in the Globe and Mail about why Canada needs to accelerate its digital maturity. It was written from the perspective of how COVID-19 has exposed an economic divide from a worker and a business perspective. How will workers who do not have jobs to return to get the training they need to acquire new skills? How will businesses be able to adapt to a culture of remote work?

The digital divide has shown its cracks as workers who have lost their jobs scrambled for online access to government supports, as students and teachers who are trying to complete the school year online lack the personal technology and the bandwidth to connect and as residents in nursing homes are disconnected from family and friends.

I have seen through personal experience how technology can broaden the lives of the disabled and elderly by connecting isolated people to a world beyond their physical reach, making their view global in scope. And now, COVID-19 has taught so many of us the importance of technology in navigating our world.

Libraries are connectors, and in a post-pandemic world, the need for us to support our communities will never be more real. Once we enter the “new normal” phase, libraries will play an even greater role in supporting people looking for jobs and re-skilling. We will need to enhance

programs and partnerships that will not only get people back to work, but will help build new skills that will be required as we shape a new economy.

We will be looking at new programs to develop technological skills for people of all ages and abilities. Since we've been closed, many seniors have not been able to enjoy reading because they don't know how to download eBooks. Libraries need to do more to ensure no one is left behind.

Partnerships are how you get the big ticket items done. Broadband is expensive and even in Aurora, many people do not have access to high speed internet. The gap between the haves and have nots has only been highlighted during this crisis. I'd love to see libraries, educational institutions and government working together to make high speed broadband accessible and affordable to all our residents.

Technology gives you the power to transform your world in so many ways – to bridge gaps and create a more equitable society. Library Land has a long history of reinventing ourselves to respond to the needs of our communities. I'm looking forward to the next step in our evolution.

*Reccia Mandelcorn is the Manager, Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. The opinions expressed in this column reflect her personal thoughts about the engagement of community with their public library.*

## THIS WEEK'S POLL

Is York Region ready to move  
into Stage 3 of Ontario's  
re-opening plan?

Yes No Unsure

[www.theauroran.com](http://www.theauroran.com)

| RESULTS<br>TO DATE<br>July 21, 2020 | YES<br>50% | NO<br>38% | UNSURE<br>12% |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|

Summer is finally here, along with the beautiful weather we've been craving for so many months. As the temperatures soar, we are likely spending more time outdoors, more time socializing, and less time isolating in our homes.

Indeed, summer brings with it an easier, more carefree lifestyle that is synonymous with the season. Which means we need to stay smart. We are in a much better place today than we were a few short months ago, so we must continue to practice what our health experts advise and keep up with the precautions that have so far served us well.

Recently, our government presented Canadians with a fiscal snapshot. For many, the debt we have incurred fighting this pandemic might seem staggering. I ran on a campaign of fiscal responsibility, yet still believe the measures we took to ensure our well being were, and continue to be, the right decisions.

COVID-19 has been the greatest challenge many of us have ever faced. I have seen firsthand its dramatic impact on lives, communities and businesses, and am proud of how quickly and effectively we have responded. Measures to flatten the curve in Canada are working, and efforts are underway across the country to safely and gradually reopen the economy.



## MP'S REPORT

Tony Van Bynen, MP  
Newmarket - Aurora

I am heartened by how we have invested in Canadians to ensure that our country remains strong, healthy, and poised for recovery. And I will be with you, doing my part, to build an even better, more inclusive Canada as we overcome these challenges.

As we continue to safely restart the economy, many Canadian businesses are continuing to face significant challenges and uncertainty. That's why our government is proposing changes to the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) that would provide broader and better targeted support so that workers can return to their jobs quickly as the economy recovers.

To date, the CEWS has supported roughly 3 million Canadian workers to stay on payroll, and with these changes even more Canadians will benefit. These changes would extend the subsidy until December 19, 2020,

with details for a redesigned program until November 21, 2020. The changes would ensure that all eligible employers facing a revenue loss can qualify and introduce a top-up subsidy to those who have been the hardest hit by the pandemic.

These important changes, if passed, would help employers re-hire workers quickly while ensuring that those currently using the program can continue to receive support, even as they recover.

Speaking of supporting their community during this crisis, I would like to give a big shout out to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce (ACOC). Their efforts began with a survey to the business community, and personal calls to more than 300 businesses to determine their needs.

The ACOC was the first York Region Chamber to launch a Shop Local website – [ShopFromHomeAurora.ca](http://ShopFromHomeAurora.ca) – and they developed the Shop Local marketing plan, which included the launch of the [ExploreAurora.ca](http://ExploreAurora.ca) website.

In addition, they have hosted virtual networking breakfasts, “After 5” socials, and other regularly scheduled events online.

The Aurora Chamber team are definitely community champions.

Until next time, enjoy the summer – and stay safe!

## Aurora Quiz - Part 8

It's once again time to find out how well you know the Town in which you live with Inside Aurora's eighth Aurora Quiz.

As usual, the questions are a bit challenging, but to make it easier, all of them provide a 50% chance of being correct.

- How many printed titles (books) reside in the Aurora Public Library – more or less than 100,000?
- True or false; a Citizen of the Year has been recognized in Town for the past 50 years?
- In 2019 which tree species was the most commonly planted on the boulevards and in parks in Town: Autumn Blaze Maple or Accolade Elm?
- Trumpeter swans are often seen in Town, thanks to the work of resident Harry Lumsden, who helped re-establish this species in Ontario after it was hunted into extinction in the 1800s. Can trumpeter swans also be seen as one of animals that fill in the spaces on the achievements mural at Yonge and Wellington?
- There are dozens of municipalities called Aurora world-wide. At around 65,000 residents, is ours the largest by population?
- On the east side of Yonge near Industrial Parkway South is a protected historical structure made of limestone, several blocks tall. What is it: the remains



## INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

of a bridge abutment for the railway that used to run along Yonge Street, or a cairn commemorating the original settlers in Aurora?

7. True or false; Under normal (ie: non-COVID) circumstances, Canine Commons, the leash-free dog park, is accessible 24 hours a day?

8. Aurora's first Council, which convened in 1863, consisted entirely of men. How long did it take the Town to elect a female Council member; more or less than 75 years?

9. True or false: when head of track reached Aurora in 1853, the first train to arrive here was given the name “Aurora”?

10. Aurora once had both its own hydro utility and TV station. Which one survived the longest before being taken over; Aurora Hydro or Aurora Cable?

11. True or false; in 1932, mammoth bones were discovered by a farmer on

his property northeast of what is now Wellington and Bayview.

12. Aurora Storm is associated with which sport: badminton or volleyball?

13. True or false, Charles Doan, the Town's first postmaster and the person credited with naming Aurora, was once imprisoned?

14. According to The Aurora Chamber of Commerce's business directory, does Aurora have more dental offices or legal firms?

15. Frederick Tilston was: a Victoria Cross recipient who later lived in Aurora, or the founder of St Andrew's College?

16. Including just the ones that the Town maintains, are there more baseball diamonds or outdoor tennis courts in Aurora?

17. “Choice Cut-up” was the name of a former Aurora: stand-up comedy venue, or a chicken processing facility?

18. True or false: the oldest items from this area in the collection of the Aurora Museum are farm implements thought to date from the late 1700s?

19. Of Aurora's almost 500 roads, which letter do the most street names start with, “C” or “M”?

20. Which is older: Aurora's Masonic Lodge, or the country of Canada?

Feel free to e-mail Scott at:  
[machellscorners@gmail.com](mailto:machellscorners@gmail.com)

Continued on page 15



# Virtual college fair helps students make the right choices for their future

By Brock Weir

It is a challenging time for students to visit colleges to learn more about the programs that might be a key stepping stone to their future, but the Aurora Public Library is stepping up to the plate this week to help make these tough choices a bit easier. Starting Thursday, August 6, the Aurora Public Library will host a series of Virtual College Fairs for up to 98 students at a time from across the community.

Held over Zoom, these sessions, which will run on select dates and times through August 19, will feature representatives from 13 Ontario colleges highlighting the interesting and exciting programs their schools have to offer for the students of today and tomorrow.

“We just want to give the students the chance to meet recruiters to find out more about the programs, learn more about the colleges they have had offers from, and consider which ones they are looking at because all schools have different offerings,” says coordinator Tim Neale, Adult Librarian for the Aurora Public Library. “A lot of students

in Grade 10 and Grade 11 are also thinking about what they are going to do and this gives them an idea of what courses are available, what career options they can think about, and what high school credits they need to get accepted into the program they really want to do.”

The Virtual College Fair is also a good opportunity for people who are “scrambling to find a new way forward” with their careers in rapidly changing and evolving environments.

“Most recruiters agreed that some of the programs they would talk about would be second career-type options where the future is pretty bright in being able to find something going forward,” says Neale.

Sheridan College kicks off the Virtual College Fair series on August 6, with a session from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Humber College takes centre stage on August 7 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., followed that morning by Durham College from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sessions continue on August 11 with Conestoga College from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., and Canadore College from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Presentations the following day

kick off from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. with Algonquin College and from 3 – 5 p.m. with Niagara College.

On August 13, Seneca College presents from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., with Lambton College that afternoon from 3 – 5 p.m.

Centennial College takes over Zoom on August 14 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. before the program concludes the following week with Loyalist College on August 18 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

“All of these colleges have different strengths and this is really a chance for colleges to tell potential students what is available and what programs they have that should interest them – and convince them to go to that school!” says Neale. “This is a way for them to get a sense of what is out there, what they might want to do, and some of these colleges

have strong connections to universities as well, so it is a way to find out what is happening.”

This is not the first time the Aurora Public Library has held college and university fairs, but the current pandemic has promoted the Library to re-think how the program is delivered. If this month’s program proves a success, Neale says he hopes more opportunities will come down the line.

“I want to expand it to include universities around Christmas or sometime in February (around Family Day) because right now it is hard for students to get that kind of information up front,” he says.

To register for any or all of the sessions, contact Adult Librarian Tim Neale at [neale@aurorapl.ca](mailto:neale@aurorapl.ca) or at 905-727-9494 x290.

Advertorial

## ASK Online Canada Engages High School Students for Success

Students have several opportunities for learning but online learning is one of the fastest growing ways for high school students to earn credits. ASK Online Canada is an Ontario accredited, private high school (Grades 9-12) that offers students opportunities to study online credit courses toward the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

The benefits of online studying are plentiful; students can start at any time and learn at their own pace, they can study when their schedules permit, they can take as much time or as little time as needed to complete their credits and they can study from anywhere. Students strengthen their responsibility and time management

skills while working toward course completion. Upon completion, students enjoy a great sense of achievement and success. Students can study full time or supplement their courses by studying part-time. Final reports are sent to the student’s home school upon completion and will be added to the student’s transcript. Caring, experienced teachers are always available to help!

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If you have any questions at all, please just ASK! [info@askonlinecanada.ca](mailto:info@askonlinecanada.ca) / 416-735-5547

### COVID Alert app now available for download

From page 3

COVID-19. I encourage all Ontarians to download and use the app, as the more people who use the app, the more it will help to stop the spread of COVID-19.”

The app supports the efforts of public health units, allowing the province to quickly test, trace and isolate cases of COVID-19 to stop the spread of the virus and prepare for any potential outbreaks - without sharing any personal information.

If an app user receives a message from COVID Alert that they may

have been exposed to the virus, they should follow the public health advice given on the app and get tested. To notify other people if an app user has tested positive for COVID-19, they can enter their one-time key from Ontario’s test results website ([Ontario.ca/covidresults](https://ontario.ca/covidresults)) into the app. A message will then be sent to other app users who have been within two metres of them for at least 15 minutes within the past 14 days, without sending any information that identifies the user, or the time and place of exposure.



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By Brock Weir

As we prepare to celebrate our twentieth anniversary this fall, The Auroran continues its look back at some of the stories and issues that were the hallmarks of our first year coming into Aurora homes – and beyond!

In 2001, the northeast corner of Yonge and Church was the centre of significant public focus as the Town came together to raise more than \$1 million for the construction of the present home of the Aurora Public Library (APL).

Co-chaired by future Aurora mayor Geoff Dawe, it was a highlight successful campaign, which not only galvanized the community but allowed the APL to expand to the community hub that it is today.

In this piece from our May 8, 2001 edition, the fundraising efforts had nearly hit the halfway point.

THE TOP STORY

A campaign to raise \$1 million in support of the new \$9 million Aurora Public Library building project was officially launched Thursday at the existing Library on Victoria Street.

And before the dust had settled, more than \$400,000 had been raised, including a whopping \$100,000 donation from the Aurora Rotary Club.

Library board members, campaign officials, Mayor Tim Jones, Councillor Betty Pedersen, volunteers and library patrons joined to support the “Grow Your Mind” campaign.

Campaign co-chairmen Jim McAlpine and Geoffrey Dawe unveiled a large eight-foot Goal Chart symbolizing the tree of knowledge.

It will track the progress of the campaign and will be placed at the site of the new library, now under construction at Yonge and Church Streets.

The chart currently stands at just over \$400,000, almost halfway to the million dollar goal, which included the Rotary cheque.

Other notable presentations were made by Ty Canada (\$25,000), Armadale

Properties and Highland Chev-Olds (\$25,000), Royal Wood Shop (\$10,000) and Scotiabank.(\$10,000).

“The new Aurora Public Library is a culmination of 10 years of hard work by hundreds of volunteers. Their foresight has ensured that the new facility will be able to serve the needs of the Aurora community now and well into the future,” Dennis Collins, chairman of the library board, said as he launched the campaign.

“All good things take time and have to overcome a few obstacles,” Mayor Jones said.

He recalled when he was a member of council serving on the library board “when the walls were closing in.”

He asked citizens to lend their support to the campaign.

Jim McAlpine recalled being approached by Collins and Library CEO Colleen Abbott about chairing the fundraising committee, and not being really convinced until he was given a tour of the existing facility, which showed him the need.

“It is one of the greatest legacies that we can leave,” he said.

He introduced members of the fundraising “cabinet”, each with a specific sector of the business and professional world to approach.

Residents wishing to contribute may leave their donation at the current library, and many of the banks in Aurora are displaying specially marked coin donation boxes on behalf of the campaign.

“Starting today, it is a call to action.” McAlpine said.

The existing library was constructed in 1963 as a single storey facility to

replace the former library in Victoria Hall.

A second storey was added in 1976, creating the current 17,700 square foot facility.

Service enhancements will include study space, casual reading areas and expanded computer and electronic services such as internet access.

OUR LIBRARY

In an editorial published the previous week on May 1, 2001, The Auroran sparked readers’ imaginations with what the new Library building could provide – perhaps not realizing that some of the referenced media would soon be obsolete and certainly not accounting for the emerging media the new Library would embrace in the following two decades:

Much has been written recently about library services in Aurora. There have been debates about the high cost of the new library now under construction, the demolition of the two historic homes for a parking lot, the closeness of the new library to Yonge Street, the need for such a large library, yadda, yadda, yadda.

Meanwhile, library service is provided at the existing building on Victoria Street every day but Monday. Sunday service from 1 – 4 p.m. is available from mid-September to mid-May.

Home access extends library services by enabling patrons who have access to a computer and modem to dial into the library’s Online Catalogue. The library’s website provides information on types of reference, electronic resources, program information, and other services. For those unable to come to the library, there is a visiting library service supported by volunteers.

The library has materials to use and/or loan, including books, magazines, newspapers, talking books, large print material, audio cassettes, compact discs, video cassettes, and government publications.

Other services available include a self-serve photocopier, microfiche and microfilm reader printers, personal and telephone information service for adults and children, public notice board for non-profit local events and activities, internet access and interlibrary loan.

There is also a Book Club with meetings on the last Wednesday of every month. Children’s programs are arranged weekly for students and pre-schoolers, plus special events. An online listing of community services and organizations is available, and the Marjorie Andrews Hall may be rented for meetings and art exhibits.

The current library was constructed in two phases. The original building was built in 1963 as a single storey. The two-storey addition at the back of the building was completed in 1976, creating a 17,700 square foot facility, designed to serve a population of 20,000.

Imagine the kind of service we’ll get when the new Library opens.

IMAGINE THE FUTURE

Now, the “new” Aurora Public Library is an essential community hub – but the controversial parking lot’s days appear to be numbered as it is set to form the centrepiece of the new Library Square redevelopment. Much has been written recently about the pros and cons of Library Square, and whether or not now is the right time to proceed with the project as the world addresses the reality of a global pandemic. There are debates about the high cost of the project, the demolition of the former Library for an addition to the Church Street School, the closeness of the new build to an already congested Victoria Street, and the need for such a large venture...

No “yadda, yadda, yaddas” here, but imagine the future.



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## Trustee raises concerns with YCDSB's back-to-school plan

## Mandatory masks, teacher staffing issues raised by Aurora-King parents

**By Brock Weir**

As parents across Aurora and King make their final decision on whether or not to send their youngsters back to school for in-class learning this fall, the numbers in favour of that plan versus continuing distanced learning are being carefully eyed by the York Catholic District School Board.

On Wednesday, trustees representing parents and families within the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) met virtually for a nearly four-hour meeting to discuss their back-to-school plan, following the release of the Ministry of Education's plan for a safe return to schools.

As the meeting progressed, parents were in the midst of filling out registration forms detailing in which stream they intended to register their children.

Should parents change their minds in one way or the other, elementary school students will be able to switch between in-class and distanced learning options on October 13, while secondary school students will be able to do the same on November 16, following the end of their first “quadrimester.”

Aurora-King Trustee Elizabeth Crowe, however, questioned the financial impact a large influx of students in one direction or other would have on the Board.

"I have great concerns about setting up expectations for parents," said Ms. Crowe, adding this is a concern shared by many parents who had been in contact with her prior to the meeting. "We have a very large system and...

if 10 per cent of our elementary school parents decide to leave the classroom model and go to the online learning model, we would have to find approximately 128 teachers to do that. 10 per cent is a lot. In a class of 25, that is two to three kids that might decide to switch, yet we would need to find 128 teachers, which we do not have funding for.

“Even if we access our occasional teachers and put them into positions of teaching asynchronously or synchronously online, which they possibly aren’t used to because they may not have been involved in the end of last year, it would still have a significant impact. I understand parents want flexibility, but I am really concerned about the October 13 and November 16 dates – how much notice would parents have to give us? It seems very easy on a school-by-school and class-by-class basis, but the size of our system is logistically impossible.”

This is something Maria Battista, Interim Director of the YCDSB, said had been considered but conceded “it is difficult to see what will happen.”

“We are relying on the data we will receive next week and, at that point, I think we can make a better decision,” said Ms. Battista of numbers that are rolling in this week. “Even if we had the dates, perhaps October 13 isn’t that far into the year where there can be some restructuring and we would have to see what the impact would be on the entire system.”

Board staff confirmed the YCDSB will be establishing a timeline for parents to inform them, prior to the dates above, so future plans could be discussed “with all parties involved” including teachers and unions. These dates will be outlined in the future, they said.

This was just one of many questions raised by Ms. Crowe during last week's

meeting, including whether secondary students would need to be cohorted in more hands-on but comparatively small classes like auto shop and hairstyling courses at St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School.

Staff agreed that a closer look on enrolment in specialty courses was needed.

Ms. Crowe also emphasized the importance, in her view, of students having access to hard copies of textbooks and whether special provisions on mask-wearing were being considered for special needs students.

“There was a parent that I spoke to whose child is autistic and she felt her child would not be able to wear a mask the whole time; yet, she also felt that her child would stand out in the class by not wearing a mask,” she said, also questioning what will happen if a student between Grades 4 and 12 refuses to wear a mask and if that would be subject to “progressive discipline.”

Classroom teachers, alongside the individual school's principals, would work together to address these concerns, staff replied, working in consultation with parents.

"I do appreciate that parents will immediately think that the solution would be an exemption, but there are lots of options that we would like people to be aware of before we necessarily go to one solution," said Tina D'Acunto, Superintendent of Education (School Leadership). "There is a whole range of options and in our department we're investigating all kinds of mask options that would allow better breathability, clear mask options anti-fog masks there is really quite a range. We would work with the parent to see what they would be most comfortable with and what the student would be most comfortable with."

“This is a teaching opportunity as

well to develop a sense of tolerance where we can. We would work in partnership with the parent and their family physician to get some guidance as to what is the best accommodation we can provide. It is very individual and I think with everyone working together we can come up with a plan that will provide a range of options and trial which one works the best.”

# Library re-opens for limited computer use

## Fees waived through remainder of 2020

**By Brock Weir**

Access to a computer and internet is more of a necessity than a luxury today, and, for those who are unable to access devices of their own, this has been a particular problem resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now, the Aurora Public Library (APL) has re-opened its doors in a limited way to allow patrons to once again use the computers they have on-site.

Beginning this past Monday, August 17, Aurora Public Library customers will be able to book 60-minute computer sessions on 10 public workstations throughout the Library.

“With the introduction to some in-library services, the health and safety of our staff and customers continues to be our top priority,” said APL in a statement. “The following safety precautions are in place: health screening for visitors and staff, compulsory wearing of masks at all

**Continued on page 13**

PRESENTS

FREE EVENT

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- ★ One registration per household

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# Town Park band shell defaced with anti-LGBTQ slur ahead of Concert



In the days following calls from area residents to re-name Evelyn Buck Lane following controversial statements made by the former mayor on social media related to Aurora's recently approved Rainbow Crosswalks, representations of the Pride flag have appeared on the street. Auroran photo by Brock Weir

**From page 1**

morning, the three-letter word was spray-painted in red letters across the bandshell's grey siding.

While the Town was quick to remove the vandalism, its impact was still felt by Mr. Coolman, President of Pflag York Region, later that evening.

"On Wednesday, I emceed our latest Concert in the Park series at Town Park," says Mr. Coolman. "Hours earlier, that three letter word starting with the letter 'f' was painted onto its wall facing the park."

## Library begins re-opening in limited capacity

**From page 2**

times, physical distancing signage, stanchions to assist with traffic flow, plexiglas barriers at all service desks, enhanced cleaning protocols, and contact tracing."

Computer bookings will be available Monday through Saturday from 12 noon – 5 p.m.

Reservations can be made at [aurorapl.ca](http://aurorapl.ca).

This is the latest step forward for the APL since it was forced to shut its doors and cancel myriad programming this past March due to the global health crisis. In the intervening months, they have shifted to virtual programming and instituted a curbside pickup program to keep books in the hands of library patrons.

In addition to this latest step, the APL has also announced they will be waving late fines for the rest of the year.

"APL is pleased to announce we will be fine-free for the rest of 2020 to reduce the economic impact [that] the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our community," they said. "We believe this initiative will enable customers to access library collections without fear of penalty during these uncertain times. This initiative does not apply to fees related to lost or damaged [items]."

I had to stand there, to emcee, to smile, and to bring some levity to the community knowing that word was there behind me, only hours earlier.

"I ended up speaking about it: 'In our Town there's been quite a bit of division in the last little bit... in particular...and I know there is a lot of divide around the rainbow crosswalk...but for that to happen on a stage that is supposed to be open for everyone...it's just not right. We can have our differences of opinion, but when people are made to not feel welcome it's exactly why rainbow crosswalks are needed, why pride parades are needed.'

"It's why hate, bigotry, discrimination need to be called out. Change in these matters is always slow. But without your soap boxes, nothing would change at all. I challenge all marginalized Aurorans, not just the LGBTQ2 folks to find that courage and don't accept anything or anyone who makes you feel less-than their equal. No one deserves that."

Further, response to Council's decision last month to approve a rainbow crosswalk at Yonge and Wellington has been the subject of additional focus.

As The Auroran reported last week, online posts from former mayor Evelyn Buck on the subject sparked fierce debate, with some members of the community branding her words "homophobic," a claim which Ms. Buck denies.

Spouses Maricella Saucedo and Luisa Gomez responded with a call on Council to change the name of Evelyn Buck Lane as a response, a move which municipal officials haven't ruled out.

In response to the comments, however, rainbow flags have appeared along the street, including the busy intersection of Evelyn Buck Lane and John West Way to send a message to the community.

The Town subsequently responded with a statement of their own.

"Recently, there have been some derogatory remarks regarding the Rainbow Sidewalk project that was approved by Aurora Town Council and will be installed in late August in our downtown core at Yonge Street and Wellington Street," said the Town on Thursday. "The Town of Aurora is a community that embodies diversity and inclusiveness, and is committed to the Inclusion Charter initiatives of creating a sense of belonging in the community and reducing hate crimes.

"The Town is focused on creating an environment where everyone is equal and the approved Rainbow Sidewalk project shows Council's support for the LGBTQ+ community. We support living in a harmonious, cohesive environment where we all have the utmost respect and honour for each other. Any

forms of racism, hatred or bigotry towards others in our community will not be tolerated."

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**August 27 Yorkregion.com**

## **Aurora council approves Library Square project in downtown core**

### **'Iconic beacon' or project being 'rammed through'? Feelings strong on both sides**

NEWS 10:30 AM by [Lisa Queen](#) Aurora Banner



Deni Crescenzi was on hand at a protest of the Library Square project, just before the council meeting where they will award the tender for the project. Many people are upset with the cost of the project. August 25, 2020 - Steve Somerville/Torstar



Susan Walmer leads a protest of the Library Square project, just before the council meeting where they will award the tender for the project. Many people are upset with the cost of the project. August 25, 2020 - Steve Somerville/Torstar

Library Square is a go.

After years of discussion, council approved the ambitious downtown project at a special council meeting the night of Aug. 25 in a move that generated strong feelings on both sides.

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Aurora Cultural Centre, the downtown Aurora Business Improvement Area and the Aurora Public Library all urged councillors to approve the project, while about three dozen residents pleaded with the town to put the brakes on.

Council awarded the \$41-million tender to Chandos Construction Ltd. as part of an overall budget of \$51.9 million, with councillors John Gallo, Rachel Gilliland and Wendy Gaertner voting against the move.

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[Aurora buys 'strategic' \\$7.5M Yonge Street property for Library Square project](#)

Gilliland said she is disappointed council wouldn't agree to her suggestion to pause the project for 120 days, as a report on the town's finances is coming to council in October.

While Gilliland said she continues to support Library Square, she likened taking time to reflect to a customer reconsidering whether they should scrap the bells and whistles when ordering a new Mercedes.

Mayor Tom Mrakas described approving the project as an exciting last step in a decades-long journey to realize the transformation of the downtown core.

Library Square has long been a hot topic of debate, he said, but it's time for the town to create a social, economic and cultural hub and to invest in the slumping downtown.

"We cannot continue to ride the merry-go-round of indecision," he said.

While many others are questioning whether it makes sense to proceed with the project during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mrakas argued the time is right.

Interest rates are low, he said; delaying the project would result in higher construction costs, and the town is in a healthy financial position.

Governments are spending record amounts to kick-start the economy and neighbouring communities are moving forward with capital projects such as Mulock Farm in Newmarket, recreation centres in King Township and Georgina and a York University campus in Markham, Mrakas said.

But about three dozen residents protesting outside the town hall before the meeting said that council should reassess Library Square, especially in light of the economic and social implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'm not opposed to Library Square in principle, it has been discussed for a while," Deni Crescenzi said.

But he argued that Aurora has a history of projects coming in significantly over budget.

"Every time, they say 'Whoops, sorry and we're going to learn for next time,'" but they don't, Crescenzi said.

"This is being rammed through, it's an agenda that's being rammed through without proper consideration and analysis."

On a motion from Coun. Michael Thompson, council approved a budget control task force to monitor and examine all financial aspects of the project.

But now is not the time for a legacy project, one protester said.

Aurora should follow the lead of other communities and pull back on expenditures, Doug Bushey said.

Dianne Harrison said the initial vision for the site was a simple community space, but council has since changed it into an expensive, “extravagant” project.

However, library CEO Bruce Gorman urged councillors to approve the “fabulous” project.

“This will be a community destination for community activities, gatherings and events of all kinds for generations to come,” he said.

“Rarely do you get the opportunity to develop an iconic beacon to our town where the community can come together under any and all circumstances.”

Library Square is a rare opportunity to build a centre of excellence that will boost both the town’s economy and cultural presence, Gorman said.



by [Lisa Queen](#)

Lisa Queen has been a reporter for more than 30 years. The Carleton University journalism graduate has worked at Torstar’s York Region and Toronto divisions. She is currently a regional reporter in York Region, covering politics, social justice, health, investigative and breaking news stories.

Email: [lqueen@yrmg.com](mailto:lqueen@yrmg.com) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

August 29 Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society, Heritage Committee - Virtual Presentation

- Presented by the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society's Heritage Committee, Japanese Canadian artists Lillian Michiko Blakey and Jeff Chiba Stearns talk about their new collaborative work, On Being Yukiko, a graphic novel that explores an intergenerational story on Japanese Canadian family history and cultural identity.

Included in the presentation is APL's Podcast. Out of the Ashes. Episode 1.

[https://youtu.be/qWtnhk8Ed\\_w](https://youtu.be/qWtnhk8Ed_w)

**Discover Nikkei** is a journal about Japanese Migrants and their Descendants. This article appeared in their section on Culture.

## **Canadian Nikkei Artist**

### **Japanese Canadian Art in the Time of Covid-19 - Part 1**

**Lillian Michiko Blakey (Newmarket, Ontario)**

**How is Covid-19 affecting how you do art?**



Courtesy of Lillian Michiko Blakey

On March 7, a joint exhibition, *IKI: breath* opened at the Newmarket Old Town Hall Gallery, featuring my work on my family's Japanese Canadian experience and that of Bryce Kanbara's work with marginalized people in the Hamilton area.

Over a year in the making, the exhibition was intended to welcome new immigrant communities into the town of Newmarket. Many public events had been planned to bring diverse peoples together. Most notably, was the link with the York Region District school Board, who were offering buses to bring students to the gallery. It would have been a wonderful opportunity to teach the Social Studies unit on citizenship in Canada.

One week after the opening, everything was shut down. Now the artwork hangs silently in an empty, seen by no-one, gallery, and our message of hope vaporized into thin air. One step forward in our goal of educating the public about the Japanese Canadian loss of citizenship... and now, many steps back.

Bryce and I carry on. After all, we are just reliving what our parents and grandparents endured in their isolation from Canadian life. *Shikata ga Nai*.

### **How is Covid-19 affecting how you think of yourself as an artist?**

I do know that my creativity has changed fundamentally during this time. Because galleries are all closed, it is impossible for artists to show our work. The catch 22 is that this exposure to what we do is a lifeline for artists. So, since everything has shut down, the only avenue of connecting with others is on the Internet. Originally, I was asked to give a live presentation about my art and the Japanese Canadian experience in WWII, at the Aurora Public Library.

My talk was divided into three podcasts, which was delivered on Facebook and YouTube on three subsequent weeks – May 4, 11 and 18. I wrote my presentations and recorded them on Voice Memo. Then I submitted the, along with art to support the text, to the library's gifted technician, who created wonderful podcasts titled, *Out of the Ashes*, with a blend of audio and picture files.

### **Are there themes that are preoccupying you during this time?**

I have partnered with a wonderful animation artist, Jeff Chiba Sterns, in Vancouver, to create a graphic novel first and possibly an animated film in the future. The main theme is one of my Hapa granddaughter's identity as a mixed-race child. As her grandmother, I tell her the story of my family during WW2.

Jeff and I find it really exciting to marry his animation style with my illustrations from *The Picture Bride*, which I had originally pitched to him. We find it really interesting to form a partnership between a Sansei who was born into isolation and a Yonsei Hapa child. We both faced issues of identity because the trauma faced so long ago continues to reverberate in future generations. It will be interesting to see what my granddaughter feels about who she is.

My artwork has obviously shifted to technology as a creative form, rather than works to be mounted on gallery walls. It's interesting, but for me, commercial private galleries have become redundant. Instead of one-month exhibitions, my work will be seen on the Internet forever. The only problem is, I will be in isolation... forever... as well. Not a whole lot of personal interaction with real people in my future as an artist.



August 13, 2020



*HoOPLA is a privilege of membership for members of the Ontario Public Library Association. It is issued 4 times per year. Electronic issues are distributed in May, August, and November, and a print edition is available at the Super Conference.*

### 3.2 Out of the Ashes

Changing times can create new opportunities, and Aurora Public Library (APL) has been adapting to our closure by pivoting many of our programs online. We were disappointed when we had to cancel a talk in May by Lillian Michiko Blakely. Lillian is a sansei, a third-generation Canadian. An artist and educator, her work tells the story of her family's experience during the Japanese internment in Canada and the repercussions that reverberated through the generations. Her presentation, *Out of the Ashes*, is Lillian's personal and artistic journey into another phase of coming to terms with her identity as a proud Canadian – not a hyphenated Canadian straddling two cultures.



*Reiko, Alberta 1945, by Lillian Michiko Blakely, acrylic on canvas, 2009*

When I informed Lillian that we had to cancel her talk, she created audio files from her notes along with images of her work that she was going to show as a backdrop to her presentation. Her story touched us profoundly, and with Lillian's permission, we created a podcast and virtual exhibit that we released over three consecutive Mondays and featured on our Art Gallery page.

We were able to reach more people than might have attended the evening presentation and learned new programming possibilities to incorporate when we reopen for live programming.

- Episode 1: <https://youtu.be/BRhol1MLC9c>
- Episode 2: <https://youtu.be/wUvpsv0ky-4>
- Episode 3: <https://youtu.be/BGEPd1pTpF0>

#### **Reccia Mandelcorn**

Manager, Community Collaboration  
Aurora Public Library  
[RMandelcorn@aurorapl.ca](mailto:RMandelcorn@aurorapl.ca)



# Cultural partners say yes to Library Square

By Brock Weir

Aurora’s business community and “cultural partners” voiced their support of the redevelopment of Library Square at a Special Council meeting held August 25.

The meeting ultimately saw Council approve a tender of nearly \$52 million to bring the project to fruition.

Once complete, the redevelopment plan will see an expansive addition to the Church Street School, now home to the Aurora Cultural Centre and the Aurora Museum & Archives, and improvements to the Aurora Public Library, including a bridge to connect the two buildings above the public gathering space that is the centrepiece of the build.

As such, representatives from both the Cultural Centre and Aurora Public Library came into Council Chambers to voice their support of forging ahead.

“We saw the benefits of the [Library Square] concept, but we had two major concerns that would have to be resolved before we could be fully supportive; the first one was how does the new facility get designed and constructed in such a way that it can become a magnificent asset which the residents can be proud of? Secondly, how would the new facility be best managed so as to ensure its long-term success?” Eric Acker, President of the Aurora Cultural Centre, told Council

“I want to say clearly that the Board of the Aurora Cultural Centre did not consider how the project would be funded and it did not consider the timing. With respect, we see those areas as the responsibility of those of you here in this room.”

In his delegation, Mr. Acker highlighted the work Suzanne Haines, Executive Director of the Aurora Cultural Centre, and her team, put in to making sure this was the path forward they felt comfortable.

“The governance structure of the new facility was of critical importance to the Centre and the Board,” he continued. “At least three models were considered. Suzanne’s experience and knowledge of other governance structures across Canada was very valuable in working with senior Town staff to arrive at a hybrid governance model. That model combines the experience and the expertise of the Cultural Centre staff with that of the Town. The close working relationship of the past two years gave our Board the confidence [this facility would be well managed].”

On her part, Ms. Haines reiterated the Centre’s support for the Library Square project was not contingent on a funding model or timing.

“Our feedback and support comes from the benefits to the community of investing in cultural infrastructure and how that investment impacts the livability and creativity of a community, [and] growth opportunities for artistic and cultural organizations

*Cultural projects also provide hope to a community by building vibrancy, livability and a community voice through future opportunities for creative expression*

and the benefits to businesses in the downtown of having bold and effective cultural infrastructure in their midst” she said. “Not to be tone-deaf to the community conversation, timing appears to be on the forefront of people’s minds given the current global situation. While I am not an expert on costing or construction, history has shown that most cultural infrastructure gets built in times of a depressed economy due to costs of specialized buildings and no other funding sources. Cultural projects also provide hope to a community by building vibrancy, livability and a community voice through future opportunities for creative expression.”

Funding, however, factored into the Aurora Public Library’s decision to support Library Square, with their Board voting to make a commitment of \$5.4 million for the build.

“Our Board saw a real opportunity to enhance Library Square through a more integrated, holistic relationship and through the wisdom of our Board and you all at Council, we now have this remarkable connecting bridge and corridor,” said Bruce Gorman, CEO of the Aurora Public Library. “The Library is all in, we’re ready to go, and now is the time for this fabulous project. It has been planned for a long time and it is time for this project to start. This will be a community destination for activities, gatherings, and events of all kinds for generations to come.

“I have had the good fortune of working on many public infrastructure plans in my career and have experienced firsthand their transformative abilities. This is exactly the opportunity that we have with Library Square. Rarely do you get the opportunity to develop an iconic beacon to our Town where the community can come together under any and all circumstances. Rarely do you see a centre of excellence which includes a Library, Cultural Centre and Town partnership of this magnitude. In fact, we have already begun discussions of working collaboratively together to bring a more fulsome programming experience to the residents of Aurora. Rarely do you have the opportunity to significantly affect the economy of our Town with the ability to host conventions and conferences right in our downtown core.”

In voicing his support, Mr. Gorman said “self-imposed project delays”

damage projects from both a scope and quality perspective and are a “waste of taxpayer money” from increased project costs and currency valuations.

“Please do not delay or diminish this project. Nobody wants a lesser or lower quality Library Square and no one wants one that costs more money unnecessarily. There is no doubt that the coronavirus has been devastating across this planet, but we will emerge victorious sometime. Nobody knows when, but we will. When we do, more than ever, we need a place to come together,” Mr. Gorman concluded.

“For good times and bad, this will be the place your grandchildren take their kids. Hear me when I say this is a legacy, a facility that will change Aurora forever. Now is the time. Library Square will provide remarkable benefits for future generations.”



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## The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating

### Summertime Correspondence!

This postcard shows two Radial Railway cars stopped at Bond Lake, which is approximately 3.5 km south of Yonge and Bloomington. The postcard was addressed to a Miss Gertrude Atkinson and sent on September 6, 1917, it reads: “Was delighted to hear from you. Your card was delayed. I had wondered and wondered about the Garden Party but of course the weather explained. When do your holidays commence. R went back to school Tuesday so its “lonesome me” again. Should like to see you. How’s Everton? – Hazel.”



## Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

The public library is considered to be an apolitical entity, and so it should be.

Most libraries, including the one I work at, have explicit policies to that effect. But that does not mean that libraries should be immune to the complex issues and diverse stories that face their communities.

In advocating for civic engagement and social justice, we can move beyond partisanship with the potential to effect change through the awareness of a greater public good. And libraries do this by the very nature of making ideas available.

During the pandemic, I have been taking a university course on community leadership.

While it’s been a challenge to stay motivated, I have developed a deeper understanding of the power dynamics, marginalization and exclusion of diverse communities and groups. And most important, I have been encouraged by stories of capacity building and engagement strategies through a new dynamic lens.

Much of the course has centered on topics like colonial privilege and responses to systemic racism. At a time when many Indigenous people question Canada’s commitment to reconciliation and when the Black Lives Matter movement is energized on a global scale, there is likely no better time to be immersed in this conversation.

I am not looking forward to taking my final exam, but I am excited about the readings that led me to this course and topics I’ve been exploring. And in true library spirit, here are some books we can read and discuss together - all Canadian; all available at Aurora Public Library.

### A Mind Spread Out on the Ground

by Alicia Elliott

### Seven Fallen Feathers

by Tanya Talaga

### The Skin We’re In

by Desmond Cole

### I’ve Been Meaning to Tell You: a letter to my daughter

by David Chariandy

### Highway of Tears

by Jessica McDiarmid

### Policing Black Lives

by Robyn Maynard

### Until We Are Free edited

by Rodney Diverlus,  
Sandy Hudson and Syrus Marcus Ware.

Reccia Mandelcorn is the Manager, Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. The opinions expressed in this column reflect her personal thoughts about the engagement of community with their public library.

## THIS WEEK’S NEW POLL

Are you happy with Council’s decision regarding Library Square?  
**Yes No Unsure**

[www.theauroran.com](http://www.theauroran.com)

|                                      |            |            |               |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| RESULTS TO DATE<br>September 1, 2020 | <b>YES</b> | <b>NO</b>  | <b>UNSURE</b> |
|                                      | <b>45%</b> | <b>55%</b> | <b>0%</b>     |

After years of planning and preparation, Council last week approved to move forward with the construction tender and ground-breaking on the historic Library Square project.

In doing so, we will take the exciting last step in a decades-long journey to translate ideas into action and realize a shared vision for the transformation of Aurora’s Downtown core.

We didn’t get here overnight. And we didn’t get here alone. Over the course of many years, thousands of residents, businesses and Council members have directly contributed to this shared vision. And it is stronger for it.

Library Square has been a hot topic for decades and most certainly at every election cycle. Every member sitting around this table has discussed, in length, the revitalization of our downtown core, as have the members of many councils before us.

Why? Because we all recognize its importance, and that our downtown core IS Aurora. It’s the very heart of our Town. It’s been that way for generations – the economic, social and cultural hub of our community.

Unfortunately, over time, our downtown, like many other communities, has been in decline. It has suffered from a lack of investment and we have struggled to bring the long-anticipated vision for Library Square to reality. As a result, today, we have a downtown core that is in vital need of renewal.

Council’s approval is the next step in launching the Library Square project and overcoming the struggles we have had in achieving our Town’s vision.

This project is not just revitalization of our downtown core, it is a reconnection. Re-establishing that connection is the key to rebuilding a



## Getting Things Done

Mayor  
Tom Mrakas

vibrant local economy.

It represents a significant investment in the revitalization of our downtown core, but importantly, in Aurora as a whole, so we can realize Aurora’s potential to be a strong, vibrant, locally supported economy and community.

Building on the investments of the Library, The Armoury and Town Park, Library Square creates a destination for people to gather and businesses to locate and grow.

Library Square will have a complex of larger multi-use spaces and break-out rooms to provide businesses and community organizations a variety of options to hold their programs and annual events, thus providing spaces in our Town that will give our residents a reason to continue to shop locally instead of neighbouring communities and provide our businesses an opportunity to grow and thrive.

We have all seen the power a well-designed public space can have, particularly when it comes to rejuvenating downtown.

Experiences in other communities make a strong financial case for investing in our downtown. Successful downtown revitalizations have triggered as much as \$10 to \$15 of private investment for every \$1 of public investment. So, in our case, our \$51 million investment

## The Return of The Auroran Horoscope

As you may have noticed, Brock has featured a number of articles over the past month looking back at earlier issues of The Auroran.

One column that hasn’t been touched on yet is the horoscope that ran on a monthly basis several years ago.

It’s been a while since this has appeared in the paper, so perhaps it’s time to take a fresh look at what’s in the stars for Aurora residents.

### Virgo (August 23 – September 22)

A new wardrobe will give you a fresh start. After all, sweatpants have been okay for the past few months when lounging around the house and making Zoom calls, but are not as fashionable now that you’re starting to venture outside.

### Libra (September 23 – October 22)

Stress can be overwhelming at this time, so help reduce it by holding off on opening your property tax or water bill.

### Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)

You will have elevated levels of altruism towards others in the coming months. Or at least, that’s what you’ll tell people to justify that you’ve already purchased 3 boxes of Halloween candy, one of which is already open.



## INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

### Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)

It’s time to venture down new roads, unless you’re a local turtle, in which case a volunteer will probably escort you back into a pond as soon as you try to step off of the curb.

### Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

You will be the centre of attention everywhere you go today. Perhaps it wasn’t a good idea to let your daughter bedazzle your mask.

### Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)

Travel is in your future! That is, if you consider going out for local curbside pickup as travel.

### Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

It’s time to make the most of your living space, especially since you have so

much more room now that you’ve gone through half of the toilet paper you’ve hoarded since March.

### Aries (March 21 – April 19)

Take time for a quiet night at home, just like the past 177 nights since the pandemic started.

### Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

You may feel like you’re just going endlessly in circles, but stay positive – sooner or later you’ll find a parking spot at the GO station.

### Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

Your patience is rewarded, but not until next year when your yellow, sun scorched lawn turns green again.

### Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

It’s a good time to make new friends, so while you’re waiting endlessly in line to get into a shop, feel free to start up a conversation with the people around you.

### Leo (July 23 – August 22)

A relative will leave you a financial windfall that you can use for a pet project (note: for council members, substitute “former council” for “relative”, and “hydro funds” for “a financial windfall”).

Feel free to e-mail Scott at:  
[machellscorners@gmail.com](mailto:machellscorners@gmail.com)



# Local artist collaborates on graphic novel on personal experience with Japanese internment

By Brock Weir

As a grandmother, Lillian Michiko Blakey shares family stories in unique and creative ways.

Some are of happy memories, some are memories that might be challenging for young minds to fully process until they are a little bit older – but for Ms. Michiko Blakey, the medium can help convey the message.

As an artist based in York Region, Ms. Michiko Blakey, a third-generation Japanese-Canadian, has shared her family’s very personal story of being interred along with hundreds of other

Japanese Canadians during the Second World War through a very visual lens – including a recent online exhibition and podcast with the Aurora Public Library.

Soon, her moving work, which she has shared at schools throughout York Region, will be reaching new audiences through a graphic novel, a collaboration between herself and Jeff Chiba Stearns, a fourth-generation Japanese-Canadian.

“On Being Yukiko” tells the story of a Japanese-Canadian grandmother sharing her family’s story of internment and forced relocation by the Government of Canada with her mixed-race granddaughter, and,



Contributed photo

through the story, explores issues of identity for young people.

“I have been doing presentations on my mother’s story that is based on her experience of being forced from

home in British Columbia,” she says. “I have been trying to tell this story in my artwork since I first showed in an exhibition at the Aurora Cultural Centre in 2012. It took me that long to even tell the story from a third-generation Japanese-Canadian. It took me a long time before I could even talk about it.

“I have been trying to tell the story in different ways to try and reach different groups of people. I wanted to educate young people because I was a teacher and really wanted to get this into the curriculum in terms of a part of Canadian history that very few people knew about. I wanted this in the hands of children, so I wanted to turn it into a graphic novel.”

In doing so, she approached Jeff Chiba Stearns, who has racked up an impressive and award-winning resume as an artist and animator. From there, the collaboration morphed into an independently-published graphic novel due out this fall that Ms. Michiko-Blakey acts as a springboard to have this difficult chapter of Canadian history explored more fully in the classrooms.

“My children and grandchildren are all mixed race and that is his particular interest. We decided to do it as a grandmother, me, telling the story of how the family came and what happened to them, to her 12-year-old granddaughter,” she explains. “To add interest, Jeff is adding conversations between the girl and two of her friends at school. By the end, you get into the whole talk about racism and systemic racism and so forth, and identity as a Canadian.

“I don’t know what is going to happen in the schools after the pandemic, but what I would like to see happen is have the graphic novel field-tested in schools because they are being mandated to look at anti-racist education in schools and I have been doing that for 30 years.

“I hope it will be a springboard for discussions on different cultures and try to include their story – telling the story of one group of people can lead us to discussions on how their families came to Canada, what they experienced and so forth. It could be a whole curriculum unit, I hope, because it is part of the social studies curriculum but most teachers didn’t even know the story. They also don’t know what to do with it because there are no resources suggested by the Ministry when they put out the curriculum guide.

“This is the kind of thing that can really turn around racist attitudes when they start to realize all human beings basically want the same things and have the same feelings. When they get to know other kids, the fear is gone. That is what is important for me. I think it is really needed, especially today.”

For more on “On Being Yukiko”, including how to order a copy of your own, visit [meditatingbunny.com/store](http://meditatingbunny.com/store).



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